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ABSTRACT

This serial issue contains nine articles all on the subject of "changing practice," i.e., innovative practices of rural English teachers in the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network. "Byte-ing into Medieval Literature" (John Fyler) describes an online conference on medieval literature for rural high school students. "Literacy in Cattle Country" (Dan Furlow) tells how a New Mexico high school teacher based English instruction on community needs and idiosyncrasies and implemented interactive journal writing to engage students. In "Crossing Cultures, Changing Practices" (Kate Flint), an Oxford (England) University professor describes how implementing techniques she learned through Bread Loaf has increased her students' confidence and expanded her cultural horizons professionally and personally. "Fieldwork: A Research Approach to Creating Classroom and School Change" (Allison Holsten) recounts how student research on school culture engaged students and gave them a new perspective on their own behavior. "Learning To Be at Home: A Course in Cultures of the American Southwest" (John Warnock) describes how a writing teacher has students locate themselves, through writing, in their home culture, then strive to be "at home" with cultures of the American Southwest. "The Romance of Teaching: An Interview with Vito Perrone" (Chris Benson) explores the idea that good teaching is based on personal experience, inquiry, and a locally relevant curriculum. "Practice and Change in the Teaching Life" (Stephan Schadler) discusses various teaching practices learned through participation in Bread Loaf, which ranks inquiry as paramount. "Staying Afloat: How Teaching Revises My Life" (Tilly Warnock) explains that we revise our worlds and ourselves through language, and that understanding writing as rewriting yields wonderful results. "Teaching outside the Comfort Zone" (Susan McCauley) describes the challenge of teaching in rural Alaska, where conventional educational practices are not relevant to the subsistence lifestyle of indigenous people. (TD)

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Spring/Summer 1999

Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network

Magazine

Alaska • Arizona • Colorado • Georgia • Mississippi • New Mexico • South Carolina • Vermont

Changing Practice

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In This Issue

Byte-ing into Medieval Literature

Literacy in Cattle Country

A Course in Cultures of the American Southwest

An Interview with Vito Perrone

Plus more stories about how the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network encourages and sustains innovative teaching practices.

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Table of Contents

Byte-ing into Medieval Literature 4
by John Fyler
A Tufts professor serves as an online expert in medieval literature for several rural high school English classes, fielding questions and directing discussion among BLRTN teachers and their students.

Literacy in Cattle Country 6
by Dan Furlow
Are reading and writing skills developed more efficiently within the context of students' local culture and language? A summer in the Green Mountains of Vermont convinced this Southwestern teacher to have students put away worksheets and open up personal journals.

Crossing Cultures, Changing Practices 8
by Kate Flint
The study of diverse cultures in the American Southwest has led the author, a Victorian scholar at Oxford University, to rethink how the Victorians of England viewed American Indians and how that view reflected something of their view of themselves.

Fieldwork: A Research Approach to Creating Classroom and School Change 10
by Allison Holsten
Collaborative initiatives of teachers in an Alaskan school are turning high school students into field workers who help raise important school and community issues for discussion.

Learning to Be at Home: A Course in Cultures of the American Southwest 13
by John Warnock
Developing a course in "writing culture," the author avoids conventional approaches that commodify or sentimentalize distinct cultures. Instead, his students experience cultures of the Southwest as an exploration of the self and the "other."

The Romance of Teaching: An Interview with Vito Perrone 16
by Chris Benson
How can teachers keep the romance of teaching alive? Harvard educator Vito Perrone says the question "Why?" can provide the answer.

Practice and Change in the Teaching Life 18
by Stephen Schadler
Good teaching requires continual inquiry and a desire to allow one's practice to change.

Staying Afloat: How Teaching Revises My Life 20
by Tilly Warnock
Words have the power to change the world. But do they also, in the process, change the writer herself?

Teaching outside the Comfort Zone 22
by Susan McCauley
The author left a comfortable job in Pennsylvania to accept a teaching position in a remote Native Alaskan village on the Yukon River. After four years she looks back at the challenges of changing her teaching practice.

Plus more stories about how the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network encourages and sustains innovative teaching practices.

Byte-ing into Medieval Literature

John Fyler
Tufts University
Medford, MA

FOR THE PAST decade Tufts University, where I teach during the regular academic year, has had a writing-across-the-curriculum program in which I participate. The classes in this program, from a wide range of departments, meet for an extra hour every week—either as a whole or as a section of the larger course—to focus on writing. Many of my colleagues use this time for exercises in free writing, collaborative writing, and journals—in effect, warm-up exercises to prepare for thinking about and writing papers. I use the time mostly for practice with revising (with Richard Lanham's *Revising Prose* as the text, backed up by Frederick Crews's *Random House Handbook*); and the weekly assignment is usually a one-page single-spaced comment on the reading for the course, as a first step towards a draft of a longer paper. I've often assigned these one-page comments in other courses as well, particularly near the beginning of the semester. They break the ice, give me a chance to look at people's writing in an unthreatening context, and make students think about their longer papers well before the last minute.

When I taught at the Bread Loaf School of English for the first time, in 1995, I used these one-page comments, as I have in succeeding summers. But as in other ways, Bread Loaf has changed my practice. My courses in Vermont require the usual two papers; and in addition, everyone in the class writes a one-page comment for class distribution once a week (I divide the class into five groups so that a few comments appear every class day). Ideally, these comments were to be distributed ahead of time to help focus the class discussion; in practice, the logistics of writing and photocopying them meant that they usually showed up just as class was about to begin. The one-pagers did indeed contribute to a developing feeling of relaxed camaraderie, though I quickly gave up the idea of having everyone comment on everyone else's work: amid the intensity of a Bread Loaf summer, virtually no one had time to do more than read and assimilate what others had written.

In my third summer in Vermont, I discovered BreadNet—or more precisely, discovered, thanks to Caroline Eisner and Rocky Gooch of the Bread Loaf technical staff, what BreadNet and its computer conferencing capability could do for my classes. I set up conferences on line for my two courses, Chaucer and Vergil/Ovid, each with three folders: one for longer papers, the second for the one-page comments, and the third for more informal discussion, questions, and conversation. I still asked for a hard copy of each comment (I haven't yet discovered how to make stylistic suggestions on the screen), but everyone else read the papers on line (and of course could also print copies of the papers that interested them most). These conferences proved to be an unusually successful innovation: first, they saved a number of trees, no doubt (as we can all infer from the omnipresent reminders at Bread Loaf, the only thing better than recycling is not using the paper in the first place); and, secondly, the conferences established a compact and perpetually accessible archive of intellectual activity. I kept these conferences going even after the courses had technically ended—they're still there—and for one of the courses, the conference provided a venue for a continuing lively discussion on myth, the Classics, and other topics, which lasted until the following summer (where else could I so easily chat with Gary Montaño about reading and teaching Dante?). Vergil and Ovid turned out to be relevant to a number of contexts in high school English courses—mythology, epic, and classical influences on British and American literature. I'm teaching the same two courses in 1999, and I think I'll simply add them to the Chaucer and Vergil Conferences that are already in place. I'll be interested to compare the 1997 papers with what someone says next July about Book Two of the *Aeneid* or the "Wife of

John Fyler at Bread Loaf in Vermont consulting with Brad Busbee

Bath's Tale," and I hope the comparison will be interesting for others as well.

Changing practice at Bread Loaf is easier, I've found, than carrying innovations home. My students at Tufts are still photocopying their comments (or having me do it) for others in the workshop; and though the discussions are often lively, they lack the intense focus and energy of a Bread Loaf class. The differences are not altogether surprising: these are undergraduates, not secondary school teachers, and like most undergraduates, they're capable of being distracted or at loose ends; the larger class meets twice a week, and the workshop once, not every day. (In this respect, a secondary school class, meeting four or five days a week, might be closer to the Bread Loaf situation.) Since the workshop devotes an hour each week specifically to talking about writing, there's less need for us to be in touch outside of class. Even so, since most of my students use email all the time and are quite comfortable using computers, I'm still hoping to make better use of the electronic network at Tufts.

I do wonder, though, if the uses of BreadNet aren't singularly appropriate for the internal workings of summer classes at Bread Loaf. During the rest of the year, BreadNet seems tailor-made for the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network. Applied to this network of teachers, the technology makes it possible for teachers and students to communicate with other teachers and students, scattered in remote rural places across the country. I'm not telling you anything new, as the scores of conferences on BreadNet suggest. I am intrigued by some questions, and possibilities, that came up during my two-year stint as the resident "expert" for the Chaucer conference for high school students. Participation by teachers in the BLRTN has been the backbone of this conference during the two years I've participated (taking John Fleming's place): Janet Atkins, Risa Udall, Brad Busbee, Priscilla Kelley, and Anne Gardner. These teachers agree on a common curriculum for a month: the "General Prologue" to the *Canterbury Tales* and the "Pardoner's Tale," along with the film *Becket*. Their students begin the month by writing short (and wonderful) introductions of themselves and their communities. (I showed these to Larry Benson, a medievalist at Harvard who edited the *Riverside Chaucer* and who has the best Chaucerian Web site; he loved them, particularly the ones from Risa Udall's class in St. Johns, Arizona, because he himself is from a small town in Arizona.) With their teachers' guidance, the high school students move on to exchanging ideas about the reading, and responding to each other's papers. At the month's end, each class can ask up to six questions of the "expert," who found their questions to be surprisingly difficult, because unexpected; and I was provoked to do some serious thinking about issues I don't usually think about in Chaucer and medieval literature. You'll see what I mean with these three representative questions. "The sexual innuendoes and the gory aspects of Chaucer seem out of place in a time when chivalry and gallantry historically prevailed. Why did Chaucer choose to appeal to the dark side of human nature?" "Where did Chaucer get his wide use of vocabulary (words that rhyme no less) especially in light of the fact that there were no dictionaries or standardized rules?" "Why did medieval people enjoy allegory so much?"

> The conferences established a compact and perpetually accessible archive of intellectual activity. I kept these conferences going even after the courses had technically ended.

It must be said that this Chaucer conference worked better in the first year than the second, when communication between the several classes seemed to fizzle out, and only two of them sustained the conference's momentum for the whole month. Part of the problem was scheduling and coordination. If there are any glitches, with only one month to cover everything, you've already moved on to the next thing in the curriculum by the time they're fixed. If, as Janet Atkins lamented, the teacher is doing all the typing on the computer, she's adding a time-consuming extra task to an already busy schedule. There can also be other computer problems. Hazel Lockett was going to join the group in 1997 with her students at an inner-city high school in East Orange, New Jersey; and I was eagerly looking forward to reading their exchanges with rural students. But she had trouble working out an Internet connection, until it was too late: her particularly memorable message "HELP!!!" showed up on the screen when the month was nearly over. Despite the problems, though, I much enjoyed being able to eavesdrop on these conferences, and hope I'll have the chance to do so again next year. They add an important, even crucial dimension to the BLRTN; and I'm thinking already about ways in which I might engage my largely suburban college students in conversations about Chaucer with these lively and intelligent high school students from rural schools around the country. ❦

Literacy in Cattle Country

Dan Furlow
Clayton High School
Clayton, NM

EARLY IN THE EPIC *Lonesome Dove*, Woodrow muses that long-lost friend Jake Spoon "hasn't changed a bit." Gus retorts, "You're one to talk. When's the last time you changed?" That's a good question. As a teacher, I ought to be in the business of change. Folk wisdom tells us that, apart from death and taxes, we can always count on things changing. But I'm an old guy, forty-five years old to be exact. Maybe I've done all the changing that I want to do. But the kids I teach and the ever-changing world they will inherit demand that I constantly work to improve my teaching to prepare them better for that world. And if that means that I need to change my teaching methods, then I better get to it.

I recently spent my first summer at Bread Loaf as a new Fellow in the Rural Teacher Network. I'd like to tell you that my involvement in a telecommunications project, in which students discuss literature or other topics of interest via the Internet with students in other schools and frequently in other states, has changed the way that I teach, but that isn't the case. I'm just getting started with some of these technology projects. What actually happened was I realized before I even left the Green Mountains of Vermont that I needed to change the way I was going to conduct my classroom when I returned home to the high plains of northeastern New Mexico.

The catalyst for that change was Dixie Goswami and Jackie Royster's class, "Language, Culture, and the Development of Literacy." What I heard in their class confirmed what I had previously suspected about the nature of what it means to be an English teacher. Let me backtrack a little. I've only been teaching for five years, starting a new career in the classroom at the age of forty. So what? Well, during the intervening twenty-odd years between high school graduation and that first day in the classroom as a teacher, I was developing my own literacy skills.

I spent a lot of time away from family while in the military. I wrote many letters. First to parents, later to my wife and children. I did a lot of reading (Thank heavens Army manuals have lots of pictures!). I also read for personal pleasure to pass the time in airports or in a pup tent thousands of miles from home. I wrote after-action reports, operations orders, personnel evaluations, and countless memoranda for many purposes. Presenting information in staff briefings, addressing formations of soldiers, or issuing orders meant that I also needed to communicate orally. Accuracy with language was relevant and important to me because language had a purpose. I got on-the-job training in why I might want to pronounce "creek" as something other than "crick."

Now enter a graying, neophyte English teacher, a child of the Sixties, no less, educated during a time when we were all lined up in neat rows and rote memorization was the rule of the day. Here, thirty years later, I stood in front of these kids in the 1990s and delivered dry, cookbook lessons about nouns and verbs and the symbolism of the Great White Whale just like the lessons I had endured. But I knew that my interest and love of reading and writing didn't spring from that kind of mind-numbing drill. And yet, even though I knew that I needed to change what I was teaching and how I was teaching, I was trapped by convention. And so were the kids. Although they were bored to tears with find-the-subject-and-predicate worksheets, they counted upon that type of classroom activity: "Mr. Furlow, please tell us what we're supposed to memorize about this book so we can do good on the test you're going to give us." This is what the kids have come to expect from the educational establishment. They've cut their teeth on it. And besides, teaching what is easily quantified on fill-in-the-blank tests and true/false quizzes can tempt a teacher to sell out and "teach" what is easily quantified. Everyone is satisfied. The kids know what to do to get by. The parents like to hear about spelling and vocabulary word lists. And reading? Why yes, we did book reports, not all that different from the ones they learned to do in the fifth grade. I began to ask myself what was I actually teaching, and what would kids take from my classroom that would be of value to them in their futures?

Well, my learning curve wasn't a pretty thing. I trashed one dull, prescriptive lesson plan after another. But the questions persisted: How do you get kids interested in reading? How do you get them to want to write? And why *don't* they understand the symbolism of the White Whale? I read everything I could get my hands on. I read about teachers doing creative things in their classrooms, about kids writing in journals; kids writing about how they felt about something they had read; kids writing about anything and everything. But where was the literary analysis? This didn't sound like my English class in 1968. And how could I justify these activities to administrators and parents? They want spelling tests and vocabulary lists, true/false and matching questions, grades in black and white. You know, real teaching, not a bunch of feel-good exercises. Still, I knew that I had to make my classroom relevant for these kids. I knew that they needed to use language for important purposes just as I had learned to use language for important purposes in real life, reading and writing and

speaking for a reason. Grades sure don't motivate the majority of my students.

One of our textbooks for the Goswami and Royster class was *Social Literacies*, by Brian Street. The author presents the development of literacy as a process that is grounded in the needs and idiosyncracies of a local community. Growth in literacy has to take into account how and why people use their language. I knew I had to begin teaching my students where they were culturally and regionally. Betty Bailey, a teaching associate at Bread Loaf, persuaded me that I had been fooling myself by believing that the vocabulary lists, true/false, matching, and answer-the-questions-at-the-end-of-the-story routine were somehow creating classrooms of literate students. The Goswami and Royster class taught me what I knew intuitively: it takes a real audience and a real purpose to produce authentic writing, and authentic writing is the result of critical thinking. Ah, critical thinking—isn't that one of those often-cited educational goals that school districts across the country claim they want to improve in their students?

What am I doing in my classroom these days that's different? I still have too much coffee before ten o'clock, and I still have my students learn new vocabulary words, but now I use words from the literature we are reading so the kids can read how the author uses the words in context. My students are writing in journals. After ten weeks of school the journals are not gathering dust on the bottom bookshelf; they are in almost daily use. I'm even working up the courage to have the kids respond to each other through their journals. It hasn't been easy. The kids were confused (so was their teacher), especially when I told them that I would be evaluating their journals periodically. How could I grade them for a response to a prompt that asked them to describe the local northeastern New Mexico landscape? The answer to that question takes me to issues we discussed in "Language, Culture, and the Development of Literacy" this past summer: what is good writing and how will you know when you see it?

Dan Furlow at the Bread Loaf School of English

By incorporating interactive journal writing in my classes, I've discovered that I am beginning to create a community of writers. Just like their adult counterparts on the Bread Loaf campus this summer, my students are producing a range of writing, from memoirs and histories to scripts and opinions. And I have discovered that some students, who in previous years had never produced any "good" writing in my class, are capable of writing well. In some cases, they are eloquent. Reading journal entries written by fifteen- to seventeen-year-olds has made me "sensitive to local variations in literacy practices" that Street points out. Not only am I sensitive to them, I enjoy them immensely. These personal pieces of writing reveal something of the personality and culture of the writer. A female student who has struggled in English class throughout her high school career writes a witty account of an eccentric relative. A young cowboy describes himself poetically as being like the country, with much to offer to those who take the time to discover its secrets. And these writings were in response to reading Emerson and Thoreau. I always prided myself on treating my students as the individuals they are, but reading journal entries has created deeper awareness of who my students are, where they are coming from culturally, and where they hope to go.

And my role in this process? I have the responsibility to establish and apply criteria for that writing. I need to tell my students what those criteria are. I need to provide them with an audience and purpose that motivate them to want to write. It's a little like real life. It's kind of like what I had been doing for those twenty-odd years before I began to teach: writing for a wide variety of audiences for as many different purposes. I can imagine highly literate students coming out of my classroom in the future, even though they may not be able, alas, to produce a polished piece of literary analysis on the symbolism of the White Whale. I can still accommodate the students who will need to write critical literary analyses. The challenge is to address the literacy needs of non-college bound students (85% of our student body) and prepare them for their futures.

It's the fall of the year. Time to move cattle off pastures. Kids are absent from school to help their families ship cattle. Some things don't change. But, slowly, change is happening in my classroom. ❦

Crossing Cultures, Changing Practices

by Kate Flint
Oxford University
Oxford, England

ON A GREY, gloomy, midterm Oxford morning, in the month of November, a package arrived in the mail. Wonderfully, this turned out to be a cassette sent me by Anne Berlin, a teacher at Lincoln Elementary School in Gallup, New Mexico, whom I'd met during last summer's Bread Loaf session at the Native American Preparatory School (NAPS). The tape included the songs we'd all heard the South San Ysidro singers perform at the seniors' party and at graduation. The Navajo chanting of "Far Away," "Hills of New Mexico," and "Des Colores" not only filled my car but powerfully, instantly transported me back to the NAPS campus, to the tall skies, the thickening folds of clouds and the electric storms; to the heady excitement of class discussions; to the multiple cultural contexts of this corner of the southwestern United States.

But in some ways I need no musical prompting, however evocative, to transport me. Teaching at Bread Loaf over the past ten years or so has fed directly into my academic life here in Oxford: it has influenced both my teaching and my research. More than this, it has made me think in broader terms about the relationship between education and experience. Bread Loaf has affected both what I teach, and how I teach it.

Oxford, traditionally, prides itself on its tutorial system, on one-on-one or, more often, one-on-two meetings between academic and student to discuss texts and student papers. At best (or, indeed, with students in need of particular help) this allows for an amount of individual attention which is the envy of many universities, whether in the U.K. or the U.S. But it also means that students can miss out on learning other skills. This year, for the first time, I'm teaching my first-year students differently. They are, like all first-year English majors in Oxford, taking a course on Victorian literature. But instead of the weekly tutorial, I've substituted a weekly class and required them to write fortnightly papers (discussed in one-on-one sessions). And in these classes, I've used all the techniques I've developed teaching Bread Loaf classes, getting them to pose three major questions about the texts we're looking at; to choose particular sentences to exemplify points they want to make about authors' styles; and to work in pairs or small groups to introduce poems or themes for discussion. These are basic classroom techniques, to be sure, in many institutions, but it has been my Bread Loaf experience that has led me to break the Oxford teaching mould. Without a doubt, these students are more confident, more sure of their own judgments and voices and, above all, more alert to their own group identity than any other set of first-year students I've taught since I've been here.

As well as teaching classes, I've been lecturing this term: one series of lectures has been on The English

Bread Loaf Professor Kate Flint (right) with Bread Loafer Jeanine Brown

Abroad—in the Empire, in Europe, and in the United States. It's a series that grew out of a course I taught at Bread Loaf in Santa Fe in 1994 and just one example of how texts and ideas that I try out with Bread Loaf students find their way into my practice here. But something much more crucial happened when I went to Santa Fe in 1994: I realised how circumscribed our view of American literature had been in Oxford, how limited our courses. Certainly, I'd previously lectured on African-American literature, but that was the limit of my deviance from the generally East Coast, generally white male canon. Now, for the first time, I was coming across writers like Louise Erdrich and Leslie Marmon Silko and Joy Harjo; reading Chicano literature; recognizing my own ignorance. I returned to Oxford determined to lecture on my suddenly expanded sense of American writing, and I have continued to read and teach avidly all kinds of texts that demonstrate America's cultural diversity. I've been wonderfully supplied with ideas for primary reading from other people's course lists. Next term I'll be lecturing here in Oxford on "Crossing Cultures," building on the course I taught at NAPS last summer with that title and looking at transculturation in contemporary British and American writings. I wouldn't be tackling this comparative study of writing and national identity in this way, which is new to our Oxford curriculum, without the experience of Bread Loaf.

I went to Santa Fe in 1994 as someone with a fairly hazy idea about Native American cultures. It would be difficult to spend any time in the Southwest without asking some quite searching questions about indigenous peoples and contemporary society, but, as a cultural and literary historian who's worked primarily within the Victorian period, I also found myself asking, "What did the Victorians, in England, know and think about Native Americans?" Over the past couple of years, this has turned into a major research project, taking me into anthropology and the study of race, into popular fiction and the portrayal of indigenous people, into the examination of transatlantic stereotyping of all kinds. And I've realised, too, how one-sided my original question was, and I'm now equally looking at how Americans saw Victorian England. Just as teaching largely American students—sometimes in the U.S. and sometimes in an Oxford which I see through their eyes—defamiliarises English culture for me, so commentators on Native Americans in the nineteenth century, whether missionaries or performers in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, disrupted the Victorians' views of themselves, and can challenge how we customarily read Victorian culture.

Just as teaching American students defamiliarises English culture for me, so commentators on Native Americans in the nineteenth century, whether missionaries or performers in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, disrupted the Victorians' views of themselves, and can challenge how we customarily read Victorian culture.

Writing about how teaching at Bread Loaf has immeasurably enriched my teaching and my research means, necessarily, writing autobiographically. One of the freedoms that teaching at Bread Loaf has given me is to encourage students to write creatively and personally, if this is a mode that suits them. Experimenting with different ways of writing about how one responds to what one reads is hard for my Oxford students to do, given our university's modes of assessment. But an openness to how one's reading and studying intersects with the rest of one's life is one of the things I've cherished most about working with Bread Loaf students. In turn, this openness has made me reflect on how I might bring this into the classroom. Reading Jane Tompkins's *A Life in School*, which Tilly Warnock had placed on library reserve last summer (one learns in many and valuable ways from one's colleagues as well as students), further made me see quite how valuable Bread Loaf is in breaking down barriers that so frequently exist between one's professional and private selves, and between concepts of teaching and learning.

I'm waiting for a long email tomorrow. BLRTN Fellow Brad Busbee, another of my last summer's students in New Mexico, is working with his Mississippi high school class on *Wuthering Heights*—working from a teaching plan first developed as an assignment from our Fiction into Film class. The class will be sending me their questions—first about Victorian society, and then about the novel. I'm intrigued by what Mississippi students of Ocean Springs High School will ask and excited by this new opportunity for dialogue. Bread Loaf, in other words, will be coming online into my teaching room in the Oxford English Faculty tomorrow. And, increasingly, it never seems very far away. ❦

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Fieldwork: A Research Approach to Creating Classroom and School Change

by Allison Holsten
Palmer High School
Palmer, AK

The true direction of the development of thinking is not from the individual to the social but from the social to the individual.
—Lev Vygotsky

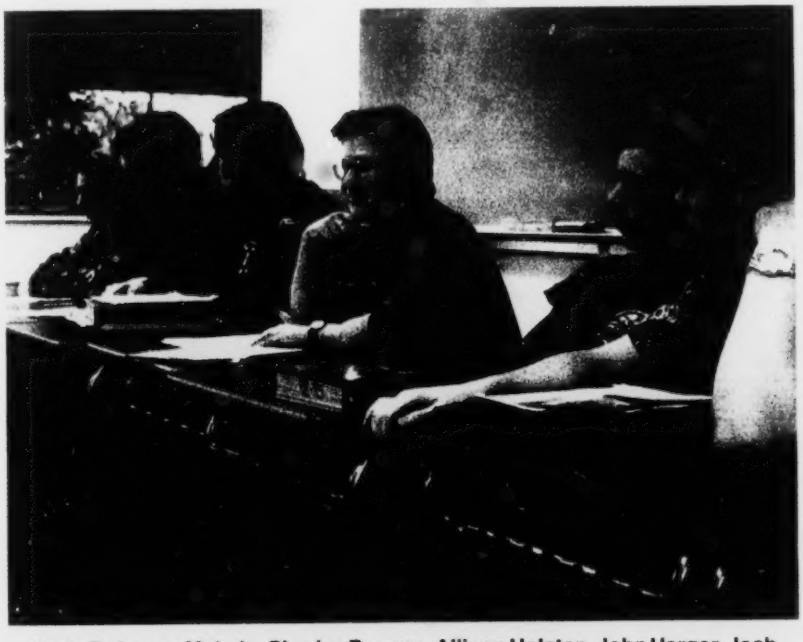
I HAVE ALWAYS been interested in the definition and development of critical thinking. Since working with Professor Tony Burgess at Bread Loaf at Lincoln College, Oxford University, in 1994, I have begun focusing on discourse in my classroom, encouraging students to speculate more verbally, and noting how this increased activity affects their writing and thinking. Tony would say that as teachers we are in a "cultural politic," confronted with issues of language, power, gender, and class. And as teachers we ought to examine these issues. Kids should too. Following James Britton's ideas, Tony would also say that language arts teachers shouldn't force children through "dummy runs" or writing tasks that are not for real. Tony's encouragement to create real writing contexts led me to teach research and writing skills to students using a fieldwork approach, one that helped me meet two objectives: to engage students in the social and cultural issues mentioned above, and to give students opportunities to explore and report on the issues in the context of a relevant field.

In 1997, another Bread Loaf professor, Shirley Brice Heath, introduced me to the text *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research* by Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater and Bonnie Stone Sunstein. According to the authors, fieldwork is intellectual inquiry that gets students out of the library and into field sites where they learn to observe, listen, interpret, and analyze the behaviors and language of the "others" around them. As the authors point out in their introduction, doing fieldwork encourages the understanding of self as each student reads, writes, researches, and reflects on relationships with the "other" (Chiseri-Strator, Sunstein vii).

As a former elementary school teacher, I knew that using the community as a source of content in my curriculum was a good idea. In Tony's class, we discussed the idea of "generating a curriculum" out of students' interests, and I later attempted a few assignments that had students interviewing parents and siblings. However, I still wasn't sure how to develop an approach to learning based on inquiry. As an English department of only seven teachers, my colleagues and I always coordinated what we taught, but each instructor worked pretty much independently. Marilyn Bock, however, was new on staff, and in the spirit of sharing information about my work at Bread Loaf, I lent her my copy of the Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein text.

Marilyn was interested, and we began to discuss how we could implement an inquiry-based model of learning. In retrospect, our collaboration began because we were willing to take risks. Our discussions became invigorating explorations of how we could challenge the students. Another colleague who worked with sophomores, Deb Thomas, expressed an interest in working with us. By December the three of us were working together and enriching one another's teaching.

In adopting fieldwork research assignments for our students, my col-



Kevin E., Logan McLain, Charles Duncan, Allison Holsten, John Harger, Josh Goodwin discussing methods of fieldwork

leagues and I believed we could avoid those old, deadly research papers in which students compile a hodgepodge of quotations from encyclopedias and other textual sources. I remembered Tony saying (again paraphrasing Jimmy Britton) that students often merely go through the motions of research, "limping around in another's language."

Our students were as eager as we were to avoid merely going through the motions of research. The kids took to the fieldwork method because it allowed them to write in their own voices as they navigated the reader through rather complicated personal narratives. Fieldwork also presented a chance to study the people they are most involved with: their peers. It is a type of "self-science." For student researchers, no action or behavior was considered too esoteric to examine. The manner in which groups of students habitually clustered in certain places during the lunch break became a sociological paper titled, "Territories." Other topics of inquiry included the crowding of the hallways and stairwells between periods, the lack of adult supervision near the music classrooms, the way the pop machines were filled and why certain beverages were chosen. Each student found a topic that provided observable data and a purpose for commentary.

Our *Fieldworking* text defines culture as "the invisible web of behaviors, patterns, rules, and rituals of a group of people who have contact with one another and share common languages" (3). Though not a comprehensive definition, it worked fine with tenth graders. Each of us teachers explored this definition through class seminars; kids offered examples from the daily life of our "microculture" of school and community. Every student was able to acquire a basic understanding of the characteristics that define a culture and distinguish it from others.

After students had chosen topics of inquiry, we asked them to list their assumptions about the topic. Before beginning their observations, student researchers had to examine their own biases, a fascinating process. One writer summed it up this way: "I don't even think the actual paper was the important part of the project. The important part was the process of getting to the conclusions through realizing my prejudices."

Fieldwork also presented a chance to study the people they are most involved with: their peers. It is a type of "self-science."

The range of topics examined was wide. Fashion was addressed as individual writers examined everything from the kinds of shoes Palmer High School students wear to how the media influence teens to buy certain clothing. Some students branched out to research in the community: students conducted research at the local coffee houses, tanning parlors, bowling alley, and doctors' offices waiting rooms, where they found interesting people with valid and extensive information about our community. Surprisingly, many students decided to research language issues and speech communities, examining the use of profanity, put-downs or "dissing," even the language of misunderstandings between friends. One memorable project entitled "Classroom Conversations" carefully analyzed the author's algebra class in terms of student and teacher interaction. The conclusion? A few students who show a lack of respect can dominate and destroy a classroom learning culture. Other titles included: "Once You Go Black, You Can't Come Back: Tanning Addiction," "Physical and Verbal Abuse at the Senior Wall," "Language Differences between Adults and Teenagers," "The Language of the Library," "Communication between Friends, Family, and Couples," "Offensive Language and Speech," "Group Acceptance," "Sexual Harassment: Flirting or Hurting?" and "Abuse within the Relationship."

My colleagues and I were awed by the honesty and authority of these reports. One student examined the issue of spousal abuse within her own family. Another used the struggles between parents and teens to compile a thoughtful and provocative analysis of the differences in attitudes and values between the generations. Clint, a hockey player, researched the use of offensive language. He conducted his initial observations in locker rooms but was surprised when he discovered relevant data on his subject in various classrooms. I interviewed him after he completed his project, and he said, "I ended up observing one of my classrooms. My teacher was out at the time, and it got pretty bad in there. It got to the point that females were cutting down the males, very sexist and so on. I interviewed one of my classmates. He told me there is really no such thing as offensive language. I thought that was pretty interesting. He said the thing that makes language offensive is who you talk to. I could call someone a jerk and they'd just laugh in my face, but then I could call someone else a jerk and they might call me something back in defense, thereby showing that my speech was offensive. In thinking about it, I came to believe there was no such thing as absolute offensive speech because it depended on the context."

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Fieldwork

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I could see from Clint's response that he had begun to understand subtle points in his research. The idea of offensive language wasn't a black-and-white subject, and his explanation of the effect of context on language reflects his serious consideration of the fieldwork and his findings.

Near the end of the interview, I asked Clint what he learned about fieldwork.

AH: What advice would you give to somebody who was starting out fresh with fieldwork and had the same ideas you had when you started?

Clint: My advice would be just start it and it will be fun. Just go have a good time with it . . . don't tell anybody you're doing a project. Just go out and do everything you normally do and. . . .

AH: So what things might you do in the project that are different from what you normally do?

Clint: I didn't do anything differently. Um, I changed the way I spoke. That was about it.

AH: What do you mean?

Clint: Like, I don't really have the cleanest mouth in the world, and I admit to that. I'll be the first one to admit it, so I cleaned up my speech pretty much.

AH: Why?

Clint: I cleaned it up pretty much because I was there to observe other people, and I didn't want to have to be distracted by myself. I didn't really feel like adding myself into the project.

AH: So, you recognized you were trying to be an observer, even though nobody else knew?

Clint: Yeah, exactly.

Clint's recognition of himself as an impartial observer is an important one. As a member of the hockey team, Clint participated in that "culture" and "language." But, I believe, as a result of doing fieldwork on this particular discourse community, he is now able to view it as such, i.e. a culture in which he participates and one that he can move beyond or incorporate into a larger structure. The fieldworking approach forces kids to step outside of themselves briefly to look around at their place in their world. As they do so, I sense that truths are brought home and new concepts are developed internally. As the kids talked about their fieldwork, we observed them developing mature perspectives on their own behaviors, particularly in relation to the culture around them.

We have begun to appreciate teaching in an environment of mutual support because it helps us to take more risks and to accept the occasional failure that is surely within the experience of all innovative teachers.

We teachers are learning too; we continue to collaborate. We experiment with new approaches to the project and depend on the *Fieldworking* text for new insights and guidance. We share materials and ideas for assessment. We listen and learn from each other, and we take what we learn from our shared reflections to the classroom in order to change our practices and do what is best for the students. Changing teaching practice takes support and encouragement. We've discovered we can provide that for each other.

We have also begun to appreciate teaching in an environment of mutual support because it helps us to take more risks and to accept the occasional failure that is surely within the experience of all innovative teachers. In the process, we grow more critical and more objective.

An ethnographic approach to research, reading, and writing works well with high school students. Now in our second year, we think that the long-term benefit of the fieldworking approach will help address school issues and conflicts. We began by requiring the students to present the results and an account of their research orally to their classmates. This year we'd like to expand on the idea and have a symposium in the spring in which writers will present their findings to the entire sophomore class. Our bet is that we will start to see some positive changes in school climate as more of our students become fieldworkers in their school and community and share what they learn. ❦

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Learning to Be at Home: A Course in Cultures of the American Southwest

by John Warnock
University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ

Culture is webs of significance in which we find ourselves suspended.
—Clifford Geertz

MY COURSE AT Bread Loaf for the last several summers has been called "Cultures of the American Southwest." It is a course that is very dear to my heart, which I've been able to teach in its heartland, in what must be two of the best possible locations for such a course: first, at the Bread Loaf campus at St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and now at the Bread Loaf summer campus at the Native American Preparatory School on the Pecos River in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

This course is not about "culture" in the "high culture" sense—not about Santa Fe's nationally celebrated opera or its thriving theater and arts scenes, as another perfectly respectable course might be. More significantly for me, the course is offered not as part of the School of English's program in literature but as part of its program in writing, and this distinction has made a significant difference in how I have thought about what it is to teach culture *and* what it is to teach writing.

Culture didn't exist as a subject, as something that might be studied in school, until the late nineteenth century. The study of culture in itself, then, is a cultural invention, with an interesting history of its own. Today, however, culture is an all-too-familiar term, and it is common to talk about culture as a separate entity, as something that can be facilely contained, packaged, and marketed. It's possible to pick one or another culture to study and learn about, and when the tour is over go home with your souvenirs, more "cultured" than before, perhaps, or more aware of diversity, but unchanged in any way that matters much. This "touristic" approach to culture is very popular, and a good deal of writing regards culture in this way, writing of the sort found in the airline magazines and the "Travel" section of the *New York Times*. This approach is common in classrooms too, though in universities it can be dressed up in discourse that obscures the fact. In any case, courses that approach the teaching of culture as a packaged object flirt with a kind of tourism, it seems to me. A writing course that focuses on writing for the market could take this approach and would probably need to take this approach, in fact. I knew this wasn't the approach I wanted to take at Bread Loaf.

It is possible to approach an encounter with another culture in quite another spirit—in the hope that the "other" culture might become home. We can be surprised by this hope. We can come over Glorieta Pass and see the Rio Grande Valley in the rain shadow between us and the Jemez Mountains and find that it hits us hard, and discover an urge "to go native," to move to this place, to become one of "them," hoping to find or create the home that is one's true home. The American Southwest, and Santa Fe in particular, is populated by many to whom this has happened. We could call this the "sentimental" approach to culture. Developers and marketers make use of it, but we should be careful not simply to sneer at it. It can open the door to good things. It can also underlie the "teaching" of ideologies. In any case, it is not an approach I would build into a course at Bread Loaf.

Both of these approaches to culture see it first of all as belonging to someone else. What, then, might be the approach to the culture of the American Southwest for those whose culture it *is*? I once heard poet Luci

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Bread Loaf professors Bruce Smith and John Warnock at Fenn Gallery, Santa Fe, 1998

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Learning to Be at Home

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Tapahonso, a Navajo, gently remind a fellow panelist who was explicating a book about adventures in the "wilderness" of northern Arizona that this wilderness would be called something else by the people Luci grew up with—for her this place was home.

A number of American Indian peoples do call it home. The American Southwest might also have been called home by people with Spanish surnames who came as colonizers to what was then the northernmost outpost of New Spain, some of them before the Pilgrims landed on the shores away to the East. It could also have been called home by people with Spanish surnames who no longer claimed to be Spanish, having come from the south after Spain was expelled from what became Mexico in 1821. It was called home by people with northern European surnames who shortly after 1821 began to come in numbers down the Santa Fe Trail into what for them was the Southwest, though not for a while yet the American Southwest. It was called home by African Americans whose ancestors may have come to the region having escaped from slavery or as Buffalo Soldiers.

It is home now for Amethyst Hinton, Diana Jaramillo, Carol Krajewski, Alfredo Lujan, Susan Miera, Philip Sittnick—all rural teachers and all Bread Loaf students, all of whom live in the American Southwest, some of whose families have lived there for generations, all of whom have taken my class, all of whom have helped me teach it.

Those for whom the American Southwest is home are not likely to see it "touristically" as an exotic commodity. Those for whom it is home won't think of it as some "other" place where one's true home might be.

The American Southwest is also my home. I was born in Tucson, Arizona, and am now a professor at the University of Arizona. I'm an Anglo-German, the son of a man who was born in New York City and moved with his family to the Southwest in 1916 when his father contracted tuberculosis. My mother's father had taken his family west from Kentucky in 1922 because of the "opportunity" he had heard was there.

After I graduated from Tucson High School in 1959, I left the Southwest to attend college in New England, graduate school in Oxford, and professional school in New York City, and to work in San Francisco and Wyoming. I did not return until 1990, when my wife and I took jobs with the English Department at the University of Arizona. From the time I left until the time I returned, I did not see the American Southwest as home, though it was my birthplace. When I moved to Wyoming, I began to realize I was a Westerner. Only when I returned to Tucson did I begin to know the American Southwest as home.

Growing up in Tucson, I knew little of my home culture. It wasn't just that we weren't taught anything of the pre-Anglo history of the region. It wasn't just that the history we were taught located the centers of significance somewhere else, back East, in the places the Anglo-American settlers of the region had come from. It's true that the curricula of the Fifties did not offer us any way of coming to terms with that rich cultural diversity of my high school, which I now realize was richer in that respect than any educational setting I have been in since, as student or teacher. But it wasn't just that we weren't be-

Many students in John Warnock's classes volunteer to help rebuild historic and cultural sites. In 1998, Bread Loafers helped restore the Church at Cañoncito/La Cueva

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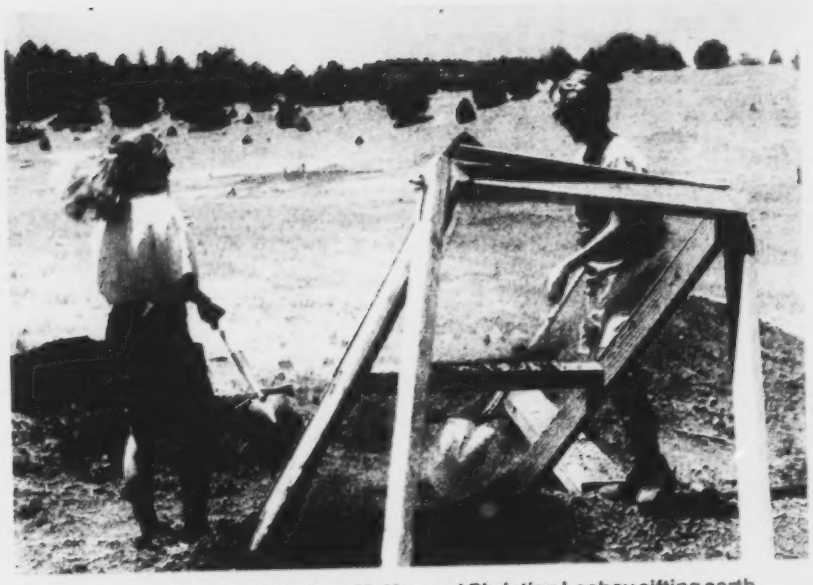

Bread Loaf students Melissa McKay and Christian Leahey sifting earth to make building materials for the Church at Cañoncito/La Cueva

ing taught in the Fifties to "appreciate" the diversity of the cultures around us. We could have had courses in the histories and cultures of the tribes in the region, and the colonists of New Spain, and the many other peoples who have come to this part of the North American continent. That could have made a difference—but not if that material had been approached in either the touristic or sentimental modes.

I now see that this culture is not something I inherited or simply discovered one day, but something with which I have had to come to terms, and always will be coming to terms. I must come to terms with it, not as something that is simply given to me by birth or upbringing, but as something that is as strange to me as anything I have encountered in my travels elsewhere. To know the American Southwest as a culture, I have had to do more than learn about it; I have had to learn about it in relation to myself. I had to bring to this encounter a sense of who I am by virtue of my own experience, what I bring to the situation that is not simply encompassed and defined by the culture. This is the premise of how we approach culture in my course at Bread Loaf.

This much is true, I believe, of anyone who comes to any cultural encounter, whether or not he or she views it as an encounter with a "home" culture. In this approach, we are invited to think about cultural encounter as a matter of learning to be at home in the world, whatever we take our local home to be. In this view, culture is not something we simply learn about: it is something we grow into and will have to keep growing into. As my epigraph points out, we hang suspended in the webs of culture, but not like prey. Like the spider, we spin webs, anchoring the strands as we may on the foundations at hand. As writers, we make these webs out of the language we choose. This is the kind of commitment we must bring to cultural encounters if we want them to be more than touristic or sentimental, regardless of whether we think of the culture as home. This commitment can be enacted in a literature class, all right, if the door is left open in the discussion and writing. It is a commitment that seems to me especially appropriate in a writing class.

In my course at Bread Loaf, I begin by inviting students to locate themselves—through writing—in their home culture. We then embark upon encounters with cultures of the American Southwest through a number of texts but also through what might be called counter-texts, other texts, lectures, class visits, and field trips that help us not to accept any one version of culture as the one true version. At this level, we encounter culture not just in texts but, as the course description says, in "travel, research, language learning, music, labor, conversation with local teachers, and of course through writing and sharing writing." This is exciting work, but because it is work that constantly complicates this or that version of cultural reality, declining to offer one version of culture as authoritative, it can also be frustrating and unsettling.

Throughout the course, the members of the class are invited to invest the writing that emerges from these cultural encounters with the kind of significance I've described above. They choose to write many kinds of things: travelogue, adventure story, literacy autobiography, curricula for their schools, memoir and personal essay, ethnography, history, biography, journalism, documentary, and polemic. No particular genre is inherently better than another for enacting the kind of commitment the class invites.

Every year, Bread Loaf students, being the kind of students they are, teach me new and larger ways of understanding what it can mean to enact this commitment to writing culture. ❦

The Romance of Teaching: An Interview with Vito Perrone

by Chris Benson
BLRTN Magazine Editor
Bread Loaf School of English

VITO PERRONE IS director of the Teacher Education Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He has a distinguished career in education as a secondary school teacher and a professor. He served as Dean of Graduate Studies at Northern Michigan University and later as Dean of the New School and Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of North Dakota. Since 1972, Vito Perrone has coordinated the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, a national organization of teachers, school administrators, community organizers, and university scholars. Perrone is the Project Director of the Research and Evaluation Team of the Annenberg Rural Challenge. He has written extensively on educational issues. His book *Lessons for New Teachers* is scheduled for publication in 1999, and he is currently working on a series of educational biographies for a book titled *The Genius of American Educators*. Vito Perrone visited the Bread Loaf School of English in Vermont in the summer of 1998 to meet with teachers in the BLRTN.

Chris Benson: Yesterday when you were speaking with some teachers, you mentioned that there are countless technical approaches to teaching offered through in-service seminars, yet you've observed that teachers aren't generally interested in that kind of professional development. Can you explain a little bit what you mean by "technical approaches," and why teachers aren't interested?

Vito Perrone: I should probably make a distinction between "technical education" and what I would call a more philosophical approach to teaching. When I think about the philosophical approach to teaching, my thinking is rooted in the question "Why?" Why teach? Why is it important work? Why teach this and not that? What are the purposes? The understanding that stems from this kind of inquiry is different from technical knowledge about teaching, which presents teachers with new methods for teaching reading, for example, or ways of setting up cooperative learning groups. That kind of technical knowledge is usually presented as a step-by-step technique, which is external to teachers. Of course, learning new methods of teaching is useful, but we usually don't emphasize enough the insight and wisdom growing from internal or personal reflection. I start with the belief that all teachers have personal experience that ought to guide much of what they do; it's a starting point.

CB: So good teaching is based on one's personal experience?

VP: That connection certainly needs to be there. Good teachers have a sense that their experience matters. What this means in terms of teacher education is that we ought to look closely at teachers' biographies in relation to how they became readers and writers, and in relation to the critical moments in their lives when they became intellectually engaged. The circumstances surrounding those moments are important to reflect on. John Dewey thought in these terms and provided us good models for reflection; Paulo Freire was a more contemporary advocate of this philosophy. Thus, there's a tradition of learning from experience and from the stories that people tell, and teachers' personal experiences are a kind of internal source of knowledge around which to construct the art of teaching. Dewey, for example, believed that a teacher scholar was one who always asks the question "Why? Why this book and not that book? Why this question and not another?" He was interested in raising matters of purpose. For example, if I want to know why students are struggling with writing, I probably can pose critical questions and find many of the answers within my own classroom. I might be able to have my students help me examine the question. I might examine it by having a colleague in my school visit and observe my classroom. I can learn from my own place. I wouldn't need to go to the university 60 miles away and say to someone there, "My kids are having a difficult time with writing. Can you help me?"

Advocates for teacher research, Vito Perrone of Harvard and Dixie Goswami of Bread Loaf

I have access to my own classroom, which is an important resource. Moreover, I have good reflective skills developed from paying attention to ongoing experience.

CB: Is that a counter-institutional approach to teaching?

VP: Probably. But I think it's an idea that Dewey put forth a long time ago and one that a lot of progressives have continued to put forward.

CB: In your book *Letters to Teachers*, you have a chapter that states the importance of teachers' being familiar with the history of education in our country. John Dewey was a major figure in this history, and despite the common sense of his ideas, they are often ignored in schooling. Why is that?

VP: Dewey isn't read as much as I might like, but there is a growing renaissance of interest in his work. Particularly, there is growing interest in Dewey's idea that teachers should be scholars who generate knowledge. There was a time in our history when teachers were the primary generators of knowledge about teaching and learning. It has only been during this century, and mostly since 1920, that the producers of the literature of education have been people who stood outside classrooms. A lot of the work done at Bread Loaf is helping to rectify that imbalance, encouraging more teachers to become serious scholars in their profession, to become writers who share their teaching and learning insights and help students become writers and producers of valid knowledge as well. The work of Bread Loaf resonates with that early tradition of the teacher scholar. This kind of personal knowledge truly empowers teachers, and it isn't found in any of the "how-to" books.

CB: Tell me about an extraordinary teacher of yours, and the qualities that made that person a great teacher for you.

VP: I can't say that I've had very many extraordinary teachers who occupied a teaching position in a school or university. But I've had a few. One was my high school history teacher, Jon Young. He was extraordinary because he'd been an active journal writer since he was 14 years old. When I met him he was probably 45 and had been journal writing for over 30 years. His journal was full of personal observations of events over the years and was, therefore, a huge source of historical information, a living history. Today, teachers attend in-service workshops to learn various "new" techniques: scaffolding, authentic assessment, collaborative grouping, and so on. I don't think Jon knew these words, but he knew from years of keeping a journal that the best learning experiences are based on inquiry. He had a passion for the insights his students generated, and in his classroom we understood that he was learning from us. So in his class we spent a lot of time thinking about how to frame questions. One question would lead to other questions, and my classmates and I learned history by following these questions. In the process each student became an expert on a particular topic based on his or her personal inquiry. I think what I appreciate most about Jon was that he ensured that his students became experts.

CB: A recent report by the Benton Foundation speculates that the Information Age will require us to be a nation of learners rather than a nation of knowers. The report points out that information is growing so rapidly that no individual can master it all, and, consequently, we need to be educating people who can continually and efficiently learn new information. Do you agree?

VP: Being a continual learner has always been important. But I also think it's critical for students to know the science, technology, history, and literature of their own communities. If students master this knowledge about their communities, and if they hone the skills necessary to pose important questions about their communities, they will then have the capacity to research and master any other body of knowledge.

CB: So a locally relevant curriculum should be a cornerstone of the general curriculum?

VP: Yes. I think that using a place-based curriculum can open up general knowledge for students. Some packaged curricula are so thin that students acquire only an acquaintance with ideas, and they don't learn how to pursue ideas deeply. I would opt to give students real power, which comes from deep learning. And deep learning encourages continual intellectual development because when students do something they believe is wonderful, they internalize it, and the next time they meet the same challenge, they do it even better because their own sense of standards and quality moves upward.

CB: You're articulating a philosophy toward learning, that learning should be habitual, natural and internalized, as you say. What do teachers and students need in order to be able to adopt and practice this philosophy?

VP: I think we all need exemplars and good descriptions of teachers who practice this kind of teaching. We need to hear the voices of teachers who take risks in the classroom, teachers who might say, "I didn't know how 'this or that' might work, but I thought I should try it." But most of all, I'd encourage teachers to adopt a romantic attitude toward their profession, and here I am drawing on some of Alfred North Whitehead's thought. Romance with one's work encourages a need to know more and a need for precision in the knowledge. Sure, you also have to have skills to be a good teacher, but one shouldn't ever lose the romance because continuing playfulness toward learning will always lead you to new insights and new inquiries, and the romantic cycle continues. ❦

Practice and Change in the Teaching Life

by Stephen Schadler
Rio Rico High School
Rio Rico, AZ

"PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT": so states conventional wisdom. Not surprisingly, a Bread Loaf colleague set me straight as to the manifest truth of those words when dealing with teenagers. He relayed to me his experiences as a golf coach where he protectively watches his young protégés with a careful eye. After all, in golf, the slightest deviation from "good form" will likely result in a lost ball. When his athletes proudly tell him "I practiced all weekend, Coach!" he inwardly frowns, knowing he will have to spend much of the week "unteaching" the now-ingrained "bad habits." When they announce "I practiced all summer!" he knows he is in for a very long year. For this coach, "practice makes permanent," and thus we must be careful what we practice.

As a teacher, I am not sure that I ever want anything in my classroom to become permanent (admittedly, there are a few students I would like permanently removed, but that's another story). I made it a goal during my first year as a teacher that what and how I teach would remain flexible. Though it has been difficult, I've resisted the temptation to switch on the autopilot even during lessons that I must repeat each year because they are stated components of the curriculum. Certainly there are days when a time-tested approach saves me from a complete breakdown. But when I step back and look at the year in its entirety, I want to be able to say that I taught something different—or better yet—that I taught the same thing but in a different way. I guess I am fortunate, then, that I was introduced to Bread Loaf early in my career, before any of my methodologies had a chance to harden and cure. Looking back, I am amazed at how thoroughly the Bread Loaf methodology of inquiry and change has permeated my own classroom.

Some cases in point. During my first summer at Bread Loaf I took a course, "Writing in Its Place," that introduced me to teacher/authors such as Victor Villanueva, Lisa Delpit, Mike Rose, Nancie Atwell, Richard Nelson, and other authors whose views represent diverse wisdom on the subject of teaching. While I admittedly did not agree with all of the ideas these authors presented, class discussions, which often spilled over into the dining hall, forced me to define more clearly in my own mind what kind of teacher I wanted to become. So spirited were the discussions that email messages flooded the online class conference (aptly named "the WIP folder") at a time when all of the first-year students were just beginning to become familiar with the online technology of BreadNet. Just as failure is as much an opportunity for learning as success, so are ideas contrary to one's preferred ideology an opportunity to learn and grow.

During the following summer, I enrolled in John Wilders' class "Shakespeare's Comedies in Performance" at the Bread Loaf campus in Oxford. There I learned the obvious—plays are meant to be seen and not merely read! And what better place than England to see Shakespeare? I attended nine performances in six weeks, ranging in professionalism from local community theater to the Royal Shakespeare Company. Cou-

Rio Rico student Hunter Wickham and teacher Stephen Schadler blocking out *Macbeth* in the classroom

pling those experiences with some basic training in blocking and staging changed forever the way I teach Shakespeare. My students are now out of their desks reading parts aloud, not merely sitting in a circle, a method I once actually considered "innovative." While their "acting" under my direction is not likely to win any Tony Awards, a definite sense of understanding settles over the room as we discuss not just the "what" but also the "where" and "how" behind each scene.

These classroom epiphanies are not limited to my honors students. If anything, the impact of teaching Shakespeare through performance seems even greater on my regular English classes. Students who have historically struggled in English classes not only seem to understand what they are reading but they do so with enthusiasm as they choreograph plastic-sword fights and cardboard-dagger slashes. By far the most popular roles are *Macbeth*'s three witches huddled around a K-Mart cauldron of water and dry ice. Previously, when I would send a group outside to warm up before they "went on," the other doors in the hallway would hastily slam shut to avoid the noise. Now, other teachers are taking their first tentative steps towards "performing" a few scenes themselves.

It seems ironic, as I crank out this piece for the *BLRTN Magazine*, that teaching creative writing still remains a difficult task for me. For years, my students' lack of enthusiasm, clichéd stories, and patched-together final drafts left me dismayed, disheartened, and repeatedly disappointed. But during my third summer at Bread Loaf, I relearned the writer's workshop format that I had enjoyed as an undergraduate. Bread Loaf professor David Huddle made the intimidating work of reading one's story aloud quite comfortable, and his book *The Writing Habit* remains the only book on writing I have read that empathizes with the struggle of putting words on paper during the course of an over-crowded teaching life while still gently prodding the reader to take those first, heart-stopping steps. From a classmate I learned of the text *What If*, which is jammed full of fun and interesting creative writing exercises. Sharing not only the title but also some personal anecdotes of what worked and what didn't in her own classroom, the author energized me, once again, to correct what I knew to be a weakness in my teaching. Teaching writing has always been frustrating for me because there is, frankly, a strong part of me that believes writing is an art form that one must come upon, at least in part, naturally. But I have since discovered that every writer, no matter how naturally talented, can progress when given guided instruction and a safe forum for experimentation.

During that same summer at Bread Loaf, I studied William Faulkner with Stephen Donadio. My first experience teaching Faulkner had been a bold act of spontaneity after I realized that my department's class set of *The Sound and the Fury* had been sitting on a bookshelf untouched for three years because no one dared teach it. As a brash rookie, I was willing to try anything. As a Bread Loaf graduate, I am willing to try it again with more care. Though I am no Faulkner expert, the six weeks spent intensely discussing his work has greatly enhanced my ability to navigate my students through the dusty roads of Yoknapatawpha County.

Finally, there is poetry. I am what I would call a Hallmark Superman: able to write trite ditties with ease (though nothing profound). This talent serves me well when writing out Christmas cards but not when studying literary verse. My solution was to spend a summer immersed in the medieval verse of Dante, as presented by John Fleming, and the British Romantics as presented by Robert Pack. While poetry remains somewhat my personal kryptonite, it no longer cripples me the way it once did. I can discuss and explain poetry with insights I was afforded through my professors, and I can conduct writing workshops similar to those I employ for fiction writing. While I am still reluctant to take credit for any good poetry that my students might produce, I can at least say we are all having a good time trying. Perhaps most important, I am no longer "afraid" of poetry and, consequently, neither are my students.

As a teacher, I am not sure that I ever want anything in my classroom to become permanent.

I offer these thoughts as a testament to how thoroughly Bread Loaf has changed my teaching and as a reminder to myself never to allow my teaching to become static. The Bread Loaf methodology, which ranks continuing inquiry paramount, resists permanence by its very definition. With each new group of students come new contexts and opportunities for teaching. In teaching, practicing the familiar is good, but so is change. Forgoing the familiar may temporarily create a sense of insecurity, but that is where learning, for students and teachers alike, takes place. It seems I am always standing on unstable ground. But the more that ground shakes, the more I like it. Who knows? At this rate, I may someday work up the courage to revisit *Ulysses*!

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Staying Afloat: How Teaching Revises My Life

by Tilly Warnock
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WHAT I LEARNED last summer and in the previous seven summers at Bread Loaf, while teaching a course, "Rewriting a Life: Teaching Revision as a Life Skill," is to have faith in what poet William Stafford refers to as the ability of writing to keep people afloat. Writing can keep a class moving and keep people afloat in their teaching and daily living.

The critical work of the late rhetorician Kenneth Burke taught me to understand writing and reading as symbolic, motivated actions that have consequences in the world. He also taught me to adopt at times the view that life itself is a rough draft; people can do things with words, but our words also do things to us. We revise our worlds through language, even as our language rewrites us. These notions were easy to understand in theory; teaching at Bread Loaf helps me practice what I teach.

Let me spell out more specifically how my practices as a teacher and writer have changed because of what I have learned from Bread Loaf students. I want to do this through images given to me by students, because the images help capture the complexities and fullness of what I've learned. But first, a few images of my own:

A hand-carved mouse peeks from under my screen, reminding me of the rats in the basement that tell me and others that we can't write, that our writing is trite, that we have nothing worth saying. . . . I see on a bookshelf in my office a small figure of the traditional storyteller with six children clinging to her and to the powers of narrative she embodies. She reminds me how writing and living can be understood as inextricably and messily interrelated, although they can be taught as if they have nothing to do with each other. . . . I turn to another shelf with a small photograph of a New Mexico sunset that reminds me to reflect on the past, to see what's directly before me, and to speculate about what I might write in the future. And whenever I open the top file drawer in the cabinet beside my desk, I see and hear the words of students in "Rewriting a Life" classes who have taught me what I thought I was teaching them—that by changing words we sometimes change our worlds and that understanding writing as rewriting yields wonderful results.

When I live, teach, and write with the attitude that writing and revision can have consequences in the world, I realize that this attitude is a choice, though not a free one, and that it is a constructed attitude. My language choices are not made by me in isolation, because I share languages in common with others and, if I want to be understood, I must revise for others. I can't create an attitude and hold steady to it, but I can try to maintain it. I realize more clearly than ever that I am implicated in all that I do as a teacher: I want to practice what I teach and listen and learn from the teachers in my classes.

This might sound nice and comfortable, but it's not. I'd just as soon not face my own daily fears about writing and the contradictions of my life as a teacher, writer, researcher, administrator, friend, mother, and wife. I don't like to face the daily forces that prevent me and others from doing things with words and staying afloat. Often I want to forget writing classes in New Mexico that extended beyond class hours to meals, walks, and talks anywhere, especially when I'm trying to contain myself and others within the fifty-minute class time and the requirements of a syllabus. At times I feel I want to forget all I've learned at Bread Loaf in New Mexico, along the Pecos River, near South San Ysidro, at the Native American Preparatory School.

But I don't forget. I remember what students in the rewriting classes have taught me through direct teaching and through their own writing. I know that learning and teaching are acts that require the "dancing of attitudes," as Kenneth Burke says of all acts of communication. They are, as he also says, courtship rituals, cooperative competitions, wrangles, wars of nerves, rat races, and other forms of order and disorder. We find our ways in and out and roundabout because we are motivated, as Burke says, by hierarchies and by a desire for perfection, as we are motivated by our desires to break hierarchies and to avoid becoming "rotten with perfection."

It's hard in most settings to do as Stafford does whenever he can't write: he lowers his standards. But it is less difficult when we accept Burke's definition in *Language as Symbolic Action* of people as the "symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal." And it is less difficult at Bread Loaf when we focus on revision and experimentation and doing what we've never allowed ourselves to do with language.

Specific scenes, voices, and papers remain vivid in my head. I can see the rewriting classes in various rooms at St. John's College in Santa Fe; at the Bread Loaf campus in Ripton, Vermont; and at the Native American Preparatory School. I see us as we write, revise, share writing, and rewrite. The table is piled high with papers and books. Some people are sit-

ting in the back in the broken chairs; somebody has her head down on the table; someone is looking out across the grass where sprinklers perfume the air with misted water, all while someone is reading aloud.

On the board are lists of names for the week's small groups that meet outside of class, a reminder about the Friday morning breakfast read-around, a growing list of books that people have recommended, the images and sayings the class has developed for writing, and words in various languages that have appeared in essays, short stories, and poems.

But the members of the classes are not confined to those officially enrolled. Even cows from the neighboring pasture lean their heads over the patio wall in New Mexico to see what we are up to. An ever-increasing number of people also join the class through our writing—families, friends, fictional characters, historical figures, and strangers. We begin to learn bits of the languages each other speaks and writes—Spanish, Chinese, Egyptian, French, German, and many dialects of English. "Rewriting" classrooms are crowded by the end of the summer, with our former selves and with people visible and invisible, talking, laughing, listening, and crying.

I can smell the new wood of the loft classroom in the barn on the campus in Vermont, see the lush meadows outside of the windows, and feel the rush of getting to class after breakfast. I remember poems, sermons, essays, and stories that people wrote in that loft classroom that, through the writing, was transformed into a rain forest in Puerto Rico, a woods in Georgia, a grandmother's home, a pasture with a horse, a bus for a basketball team, a diving board, and more.

I now want all of my classrooms to be experimental sites, filled with many people, languages, essays, and stories. I want my students to find images for what we are doing and to develop a class vocabulary. I want undergraduates and graduate students to have time to think, write, read, and revise, so that all can see themselves as writers and revisionists who work together and individually.

How can I say neatly and more specifically how my practices have changed through teaching at Bread Loaf? How can I make clear how my attitudes, expectations, and visions of teaching have changed? As I drive to school each day, I think of Amy S. driving to and from Santa Fe for class and for small group meetings, writing her papers in her head. I see Amy P. riding in one of many trucks or on bikes or skis. Suze's character drives perpetually at sixteen in my mind, while Nan walks as a young girl with her grandmother, holding two buckets as she climbs into the earth to spoon out clay for pottery. Heidi's personal and cultural histories bring a potlatch to me, and Barbra's family stories bring photographs, family trees, other lands and languages. The dialogue of Fletch's essays still gives voice to curious people and particular places, as does the dialogue of Jennifer's characters who sit in doctors' offices or fly off the page. Jeanine's singing from her performance pieces fills the air around me, and Marsha's characters keep speaking out, accompanied by jazz and other music that helped to create them. I accompany Maria to Africa and South Carolina again and again. Enas stands in the subway, en route to see her parents, who in a photograph look adoringly at their small daughter with sturdy legs and a face upturned for a kiss.

Learning to believe in my students' images is how my practices have changed, in teaching, writing, reading, and living: I rely on students more and talk less myself. I have faith in what students write because I know they will rewrite. I've realized that I like working with people on their texts more than I like working with texts. And I know writing will keep me afloat, if I'll just lower my standards at times and remember that human beings tend to become "rotten with perfection."

I'm not sure these changes are good for students or for me. Often students want the teacher to provide more direction than I do now, and most want a teacher who talks more than she listens. Most don't like my definition of writing as rewriting, especially at first, although most begin to understand the value of this working definition.

I have also extended my teaching beyond the university. This semester I am teaching a graduate practicum in community literacy. Everyone works in a local agency, at the agency's request. Three people work with Child Protective Services on the Life Book Project for children in foster care. One tutors students of all ages to help them prepare for the GED. Another developed a course for students on the Yaqui Reservation who come to a computer lab at the University of Arizona for two hours each week to do research and create web pages. Two others tutor at a local literacy agency, and one writes a newsletter and grants for a home for the elderly and handicapped. Another is working with the Balkan Peace Group on a community book, and another tutors a family who just arrived from Bulgaria. Another works at a center for victims of domestic violence by writing grants and other documents for the director.

Next year I will return to directing the composition program at the University of Arizona because the work helps me make sense of my research in composition and rhetoric. It allows me to be a teacher, researcher, and administrator all at once, working with graduate student teachers who are revising themselves from students into faculty, and with first-year university students who bridge the university, schools, and the local community. It allows me to participate in ongoing revision.

Some days I feel that I am moving out of the university academy and into the streets; other days I know I am doing what I value within the state educational system. I've learned to thrive in places where revision is essential because teachers at Bread Loaf in the summers have taught me and have become a living force in my daily practice. ❦

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Teaching outside the Comfort Zone

Susan McCauley
Mountain Village School
Mountain Village, AK

I WOKE EARLY on a Saturday morning several weeks ago excited about my eighteen-mile snowmobile trip across Alaskan tundra to shop in the neighboring village. I was hoping to purchase Romaine lettuce, coffee creamer, and a pint of Ben and Jerry's, but primarily I was looking forward to the trip itself. Wearing a beaver hat, goggles, face mask, goose down bibs and parka, mukluks, and two pairs of mittens, I climbed aboard my new snowmobile, hoping the sunrise would be the stunner it often is during the fall in Alaska. Stopping often during the forty-minute trip to take pictures of the sunrise appearing behind the snow-covered willows and distant mountains, I made myself notice at each stop the peacefulness of my surroundings and the simple pride of being alone in utter wilderness. "Why can't this be enough, Susan?" I admonished myself. "Are you really ready to give all of this up?" I had no answer. I still don't.

Four years ago I moved from Pennsylvania, where I had been teaching for five years, to Hooper Bay, a Yup'ik Eskimo village of 1,100 people on the coast of the Bering Sea 500 miles west of Anchorage. Assuring my parents that I was not "going through a stage," I knew the kind of growth I was seeking and that I could not experience this growth staying in a place where I saw myself reflected so clearly in those around me. I wanted to challenge my assumptions about the way things are and should be.

My first year here was difficult, as I had expected it to be, but in ways I had not anticipated. I adjusted quickly and actually enjoyed the challenge of learning to cook without fresh produce, distilling my drinking water, considering my neighbor's place the next best thing to a real restaurant, and replacing my health club with aerobic videos performed in a spare bedroom. I worked hard during that first year to reserve judgment about cultural practices and attitudes I didn't fully understand, having adopted "growth" as my mantra. I reminded myself frequently that some culture shock and cabin fever were to be expected. Still, I was bothered by what I saw happening to my motivation and passion for teaching. I no longer arrived at school an hour early, stayed an hour late, or worked most of the day Sunday. Gone were the creative projects integrating subject areas and aligned with district curriculum goals. The weekly goal-setting I had religiously conducted for the previous five years metamorphosed into an hour of last-minute planning done begrudgingly on Sunday evenings. By May of that first year, I had deeply disappointed myself and was determined to reënergize myself during my summer in Pennsylvania and come back to Alaska as the kind of teacher I had been and was still capable of being.

Over the past two years, I've gradually resumed the kind of teaching of which I am proud, but I am contemplating whether my fourth year in rural Alaska will be my last. I transferred at the beginning of this school year to a smaller village on the Yukon River in the same school district. I was optimistic that teaching in the same village where my district's central office is located would result in my being more informed about curriculum, as well as in the overall direction in which my district is headed. What I have found, however, is that teaching well here continues to be in spite of many obstacles resulting from very complex issues for which there are simply no right answers. I am still

Susan McCauley

struggling to articulate these issues, and I find I have more questions with each year I spend here.

Frustrated with an eighth grader of mine several weeks ago, I said, "Why do you come to school? You do nothing while you're here. You've not turned in one assignment since the beginning of the year. Why do you come?" With complete seriousness he answered, "I'm not sixteen." More discouraging than his answer was my inability to provide a rebuttal which would explain for him the importance of graduating from high school. Employment in the village is very limited and does not necessarily require a high school diploma. He comes from a Native Alaskan culture that practices a subsistence life-style, and there is no guarantee that he would, or should, prefer employment at one of the two local stores, the post office, the school, or the city office to spending his time subsistence hunting and fishing.

Why, then, should I be encouraging him to graduate high school so he can pursue higher education? This would require his leaving the village and his large extended family to navi-

gate mainstream life and culture where, for the first time in his life, he would be a part of an ethnic minority. Not only would this be a daunting challenge, his "success" in applying his higher education toward gainful employment would probably require him to live in mainstream society far away from his native land. It is not that I question his ability to succeed in either local employment or higher education far away from home. I do, however, question the merit of either option for a young man who is most content and at home hunting on the tundra or fishing at the river. And so, what should education look like in contexts that do not easily accommodate conventional definitions and practices? After four years in rural Alaska, I'm unable to answer this basic question, one that confronts and disturbs many teachers in remote Native Alaskan villages where subsistence culture has survived for centuries to this day.

Discussions abound about how to address this basic question. I have served on many committees and been involved in many informal discussions in which non-Natives passionately debate proposed solutions to everything from low standardized test scores to high rates of teenage pregnancy and suicide. Often excluded from these discussions are the people who are most directly affected by the proposed solutions. It is not an intentional exclusion. It's just that common ground hasn't been sufficiently explored. Some Native Alaskans are not interested in "fixing" the system, which in their view does not have the best interests of their children and their community at heart. And non-Natives are often unwilling to admit to not knowing the answers to these very complex questions.

One result of this mutual frustration is a stereotypical generalization about why teachers come to rural Alaska to teach. Even some teachers hold this view of their colleagues or themselves. During my first year, as I struggled to make sense of Yup'ik Eskimo culture and my role in it, a colleague told me, "Out here you are either a missionary or a mercenary." She was referring to the assumption that teachers come to rural Alaska either to "save the Natives" or to earn and save money, which will be spent elsewhere. I vehemently refused then, as I do now, to identify with either motivation but have come to understand why some people view educators out here in this way.

Some teachers here have a need to define their role in an environment that is foreign and confusing, a situation that can actually be quite beneficial to teachers' growth. But even when one welcomes the adjustment to a new culture and lifestyle, the challenge of it can be overwhelming. Many teachers who come to the bush come, as I had, from areas in the Lower 48 in which they could reasonably assume much about the world around them. I found myself those first couple of years in Alaska questioning not only the appropriateness of my teaching practices, but of everything from my communication style to my personality characteristics. These challenges, when combined with little understanding of education's purpose for our students, make it convenient simply to claim to be out here for the money. "We wear golden handcuffs," a colleague told me referring to himself and his wife, who have been teaching in rural Alaska for more than ten years, "because our expenses are now commensurate with our income and we're stuck here." These teachers, who may be lumped by others and themselves in the "mercenary" category, still spend weekends and evenings preparing lessons and materials, and frequently engage themselves in conversations with other teachers about how best to instruct their students.

Parents and students are skeptical of teachers' motives for coming to rural Alaska. Their skepticism, which is well founded since most teachers do not stay long, makes it easier for them to accept a teacher's departure when, inevitably it seems, he or she leaves. Every year, during the first week of school, parents and students ask me if I intend to return the next year. This doubtful attitude toward teachers also makes it easier for the teachers to make the decision to leave. And the cycle continues. At the end of last school year, twelve of Hooper Bay's thirty-one certified staff members resigned from the school district or transferred to another site. Of the thirteen administrators in my district's central office last year, eight of them are new to the district this year. In the four years I have been working in this district, I have had four different principals and three different superintendents. This rapid turnover is a cause of the continued inconsistency and confusion that plagues Alaska's remote rural schools.

So, how do teachers develop curricula that are responsive to communities' needs? How do communities participate in educational decisions about what is best for their children? How do teachers learn to identify their own biases about education while teaching in environments vastly different from the ones where they were trained? Are these the right questions for Alaskan teachers to be asking? Through my affiliation with the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network and my interaction with other teachers at Bread Loaf last summer, who teach in diverse cultural environments, I have gained confidence to raise these questions.

I recall a day last July during my "Language and Culture" class with Dixie Goswami and Jackie Royster on the Vermont campus when my perplexity with these questions reached a boiling point. I shared with the class some of these uncertainties with which I've been struggling, admitting as well that I wasn't sure I could continue. I received many supportive comments from classmates; one came as an email message from Rex Jim, a Navajo who teaches Navajo students in Arizona. He described the frustrations and rewards he has known as a teacher in the Navajo community where he grew up and continues to

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live. Though far from Alaska, Rex's community faces similar problems regarding the institution of education in a Native culture. Through cooperative effort, his schools and the community have worked to implement solutions for problems similar to those I have seen in rural Alaska. While proudly recounting his community's successes, Rex made clear the hard work necessary to get there. I have taped on my classroom desk the words with which he closed his email message: "Susan, all I can say is, accept your frustrations as challenges, as gifts from God, as seeds of greatness. I want to know you through the love for life that your students will express in any field they choose to pursue, through the passion they will express for lifelong learning! And remember, when the going gets tough, Susan gets going!"

I hear you, Rex, and I am trying. And "trying" is the first step toward success in a place where I must accept that I don't have all the answers to the questions that frustrate me. I also realize that frustrations in teaching, wherever one teaches, might originate from having accepted narrow definitions of what "success" looks like in other places. I may need to trust my instincts and combine my best teaching efforts with traditional Native learning approaches. What I can provide my students as their teacher, in combination with the strength and wisdom of their culture, could ensure a kind of success that may exceed what I envision for them. ❦

Book Review: Weaving "Countless Silken Ties of Love and Thought"

by Mary Juzwik
Bridge School
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Stories in the Land: A Place-Based Environmental Education Anthology. Great Barrington, Mass: Orion, 1998. 127 pp. $8.00.

QUOTING VERSES from Robert Frost's poem "The Silken Tent" seems a fitting way to begin responding to *Stories in the Land*, for in this poem the tent's "supporting central cedar pole,/. . . Seems to owe naught to any single cord,/ But strictly held by none, is loosely bound/ By countless silken ties of love and thought/ To everything on earth the compass round." Likewise, this anthology evokes the intricate way in which all life on our planet is interconnected and supported by the earth itself. Throughout *Stories in the Land*, educators develop and articulate these tenuous yet important bonds, giving testimony to how individuals connect themselves to their environment and to their cultural communities.

In these stories of American classrooms—from places as diverse as rural Arizona, coastal California, and urban Philadelphia—school teachers, college professors, and undergraduate students describe projects they carried out with the support of grants from the Orion Society between 1992 and 1996. Headquartered in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the Orion Society is a non-profit organization, founded to further the connections between people and places through publishing, environmental education, and grassroots community networking.

Idaho teacher Jo Anne Kay, citing Marcel Proust, captures the dominant theme running through this book: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes,

Bread Loafer Mary Juzwik, with seventh grader Becky Walker (left), during a reflective moment of field study

but in having new eyes" with which to view and respond to the landscapes where we live. Bread Loaf professor John Elder's passionate introduction claims, "Successful education has the power to make the world strange again . . . strange enough to get our full attention." This high-minded idealism, echoing Thoreau and the Transcendentalists, reflects Orion's mission "to heal the fractured relationship between people and nature by undertaking educational programs and publications that integrate all aspects of the relationship: the physically immediate, the analytical and scientific, the inspirational and creative . . . to cultivate a generation of citizen leaders whose wisdom is grounded in and guided by nature literacy." Indeed the perspectives established in each of the stories inspire me (as I suspect they will other English teachers) to reconsider how I might better inspire students to become literate and responsive citizens who understand their integral roles in the web of nature.

These stories could be described by the differences among the students who appear in them (geographic location, socio-economic level, or the range in age), but overemphasizing these differences would miss the "countless silken ties," those ideas that bind the collection together. Several themes knit the stories together to reveal how the environment can figure in learning: instruction and discussion about the concept of home; interdisciplinary learning; inquiry-driven outdoor experiences; assessments of learning that correspond to multiple intelligences; and collaborations of many varieties. Read together, these stories narrate the important struggles teachers face each day: gaining autonomy within hierarchical educational systems, managing constraints of time, and negotiating the demands of innovative projects and mandated curricula.

Each story demonstrates a particular way that children see their immediate world with new eyes. The voices of the teachers show how changes in their practice prompted their students to develop new perspectives on their environments. English teacher Jennifer Danish writes, "After a few years of living and teaching in Hightstown, New Jersey, at the Peddie School, I had come to the quick conclusion that this place was not beautiful." She goes on to chronicle her project with eighth graders in which she and a science teacher created a course for students to explore their surroundings. The new perceptions (in both teacher and students) that resulted were not to be found in quick conclusions and hasty judgments; instead, they came through careful observation and concerted work over an entire year.

Successful education has the power to make the world strange again . . . strange enough to get our full attention.

The stories are inspirational, but the book is practical as well. Activity plans implemented "to make the world strange again" supplement the teachers' narratives, and they include making maps, creating magazines, making books, setting up study stations along a river, writing journals, reading poetry, and making trail guides. Resource lists follow most activities, and an appendix of references and curriculum projects provides a further guide for practice. Several more pages outline the programs and resources of the Orion Society to support teachers and others involved in environmental education.

After reading *Stories in the Land*, I sense that a current challenge to English teachers who are committed to the careful study of place is to articulate how place-based studies can be situated among language arts standards and/or portfolio requirements. Carrying out a *Stories in the Land* project funded by Orion last spring, I came to believe that measuring the success of the project needed to happen in terms of the language learning—both oral and written—accomplished over the course of the project. Those skills included interviewing, preparing working bibliographies, writing two-column notes, using MLA format for documentation, writing narratives that synthesized learning and conveyed students' "author-ity" on subjects of place-based study, and supporting written text with visuals and appropriate captions. I treasure the environmental idealism that the Orion Society brings to the conversation about American education, and I hope *Stories in the Land* becomes a catalyst for further discussion among teachers about how to weave our environmental commitments with practical standards for the development and assessment of language skills. The discussion has already begun to happen among many teachers in the BLRTN and has been helped along by the environmental concerns of John Elder, the ethnographic approaches of Shirley Brice Heath, the teacher research advocacy of Dixie Goswami, as well as numerous BLRTN Fellows who have, through the Nineties, been pioneering classroom practices to cultivate students' "literacy of nature."

Even while wanting to hear more specifically about the language growth, I found in *Stories in the Land* a message with the power to effect classroom changes, by reminding teachers and their students that their actions on this planet matter, that they truly are "loosely bound" to "everything on earth," and that these relationships continually take shape here and now. ❦

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State BLRTN Meetings

Alaska

Fourteen Alaskan Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network Fellows separated by thousands of miles met on line to share classroom activities, accomplishments, upcoming events, and statewide concerns. Individuals are still enjoying success with projects like the "Anne Frank Conference." New innovative conferences are being established, on *Jane Eyre*, for example. Several issues important to Alaska teachers were raised during the online meeting: the increase in class sizes, increasing implementation of standardized tests, and the accountability of schools according to test scores. Face-to-face state meetings are being planned in Anchorage and Juneau for April and May.

Arizona

The first meeting of the Arizona BLRTN this academic year occurred in October in Tubac. The meeting served as a launching point for the year as teachers discussed the plans they had for upcoming telecommunications exchanges and reviewed those already completed or in progress. For some, the meeting was an opportunity to put names of new Fellows with faces. Afterward, everyone enjoyed a lively dinner, and a group attended a performance of Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* in Tucson. A second meeting of the Arizona BLRTN was held in Pinetop, Arizona, and focused on "writing," as teachers presented specific successful teaching methods and projects. This informal workshop proved popular and effective, and everyone left with something tangible to implement in his or her classroom.

Colorado

Distance, duty, and weather prevented the Colorado BLRTN from meeting face-to-face, so the first state meeting was accomplished by audio-conference in early February. The discussion of the meeting focused on telecommunications exchanges on which Fellows are working. Colorado Fellows met at the Colorado Language Arts Society Meeting in Colorado Springs on March 12, where several Fellows and high school students participated in a presentation on "Cross-Age, Cross-Cultural Electronic Exchanges," coordinated by Sharilyn West. The BLRTN meeting at the conference focused on telecommunications exchange updates, student publications, and the BLRTN's growing role in school reform.

Georgia

As first-year members of the BLRTN, Georgia teachers have focused on setting up communications technology to link Georgia schools and teachers. At their October state meeting held in Macon, Georgia, discussions explored the theme "Where You've Been and Where You're Going." Recruiting new members to the network was also a priority. At the Georgia Council of Teachers of English Conference at Jekyll Island in February, several members of the Georgia BLRTN presented success stories from their first year of involvement in the network. On the agenda are plans for a presentation in Valdosta in March and a spring meeting in conjunction with the national meeting of the BLRTN on Jekyll Island in April.

Mississippi

On October 28, Mississippi BLRTN Fellows met to discuss ways to influence further Mississippi language arts instruction. The major question was "How can BLRTN better function within established institutions like the Mississippi Department of Education and the Mississippi Council of Teachers of English?" Many BLRTN members already hold influential positions. Sharon Ladner and Renee Moore are curriculum coordinators and specialists within their respective districts. Patricia Parrish works with the State Department's Office of Educational Technology. Fellows Brad Busbee, Renee Moore, and Peggy Turner presented at the Mississippi Council of Teachers of English's 1998 spring conference in Jackson.

New Mexico

The fall meeting of BLRTN Fellows was held October 10, 1998, at Bernalillo High School. Sixteen Fellows attended, including two from Colorado. BLRTN activities presented at the meeting included intrastate and interstate writing exchanges using telecommunications. Phil Sittnick and Ren Sittnick from Laguna Middle School reported on their work in a $30,000 technology planning grant from NEH. With state elections coming up, political platforms on education were discussed. Mini-workshops were presented on writing and publishing. The NM BLRTN spring meeting is scheduled for April 10, near Truth or Consequences, at the Black Range Lodge.

South Carolina

South Carolina BLRTN teachers are having a productive year. Their fall meeting was held November 7 at Waccamaw High School, Pawleys Island. The meeting was attended by twelve South Carolina BLRTN Fellows, five members of the BLRTN staff, and several school administrators. The meeting focused on generating individual and group activities for the 1998–99 school year. In January, eleven BLRTN Fellows and staff met at the Thurmond Institute at Clemson University for a writing retreat. Collaborative work included personal writing, book chapters, and grant proposals. The annual spring meeting of South Carolina Fellows will be held at the Penn Center, St. Helena's Island. Teachers, students, and school administrators will attend to report the year's activities, which will be presented primarily by students. Representatives from the South Carolina Department of Education will attend the Penn Center meeting.

Vermont

Vermont State meetings always include a sharing of teaching insights, philosophy, and materials. On September 19, 1998, Ellen Temple hosted a meeting at Camels Hump Middle School in Richmond. A main topic under discussion was recruiting strategies for BLRTN. Mary Burnham hosted a second meeting at Waits River Valley Middle School in East Corinth on December 5, 1998. Topics on the agenda included teaching Shakespeare, writing prompts and rubrics. A discussion of the New Standard Reference Exam led to further analysis of standards, which became the focus for our next meeting on February 6 at Camels Hump Middle School. At that meeting we reviewed how mandated standards were affecting instruction in Vermont schools.

Announcements

Janet Atkins presented "Professional Development Models in the U. S. Department of Education Challenge Grants" at the Consortium for K-12 Networking Conference in February, 1999. This spring she will present "Professional Development for Teachers Using Technology" at the Florida Educational Technology Conference in March, and "Integrating Technology into the Curriculum" at the National Education Computing Conference in June.

Mary Burnham was chosen for inclusion in the 1999 volume of *Who's Who in American Teachers*. Her article on ecology, "Worlds Apart: Bridging the Gap between Rural Vermont and Urban Singapore," will be published in a forthcoming issue of *THINK* magazine.

On February 10, **Brad Busbee** presented a workshop, "The Uses of Email in the Humanities Classroom," for the Gulf Coast Consortium of Educational Administrators. On February 26, he presented a workshop, "Classroom Connections," at the Mississippi Council of Teachers of English Conference in Jackson.

Samantha Dunaway's poems have appeared in several magazines and journals this year, including *Blue Violin*, *The Louisville Review*, and *English Journal*.

Heinemann Publishers announces *Electronic Networks: Crossing Boundaries/ Creating Communities*, edited by **Tharon Howard** and **Chris Benson**. The book includes several chapters by Bread Loafers: **Rob Baroz, Kurt Caswell, Anna Citrino, Brian Gentry, Rocky Gooch, Dixie Goswami, Lucy Maddox, Tom McKenna, Phil Sittnick, and Doug Wood.**

At the December 1998 annual meeting of the American Anthropology Association, **Eva Gold**, documentation consultant for BLRTN, was a panel participant in a discussion titled "Learning in Multiple Spaces: Knowledge Construction and Assessment in the Postindustrial Society." Drawing upon her research on BLRTN, her talk focused on the challenges of building personalized contexts for learning across geographic, cultural and role boundaries.

Allison Holsten received a $30,000 grant for two years for her research project "Examining Students' Ethnographic Approach to Writing and Research" from The Spencer Foundation's Practitioner Research Communication and Mentoring Grant program. Bread Loaf professor **Tony Burgess** of the Institute of Education, University of London, will be her mentor in the project.

Sharon Ladner received the National Teaching Excellence Award given by the U. S. Information Agency and the American Council for Collaboration in Education and Language Study. This award allowed her to visit the former Soviet Union (now the Newly Independent States) for a month during October to develop partnerships with public school teachers and students for the purpose of exploring American Studies.

Rod Landis and **Taylor McKenna** received two grants to fund the Second Ketchikan Humanities Conference, scheduled in February, 1999: from the

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Announcements

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Alaska Humanities Forum ($7,000) and from the University of Alaska Foundation, President's Special Projects Fund ($3,000). The grants funded the travel of English and philosophy students from several branches of the University of Alaska-Southeast to attend Seamus Heaney's play *The Cure At Troy* in Ketchikan and to participate in two days of workshops, seminars, and panel discussions. Bread Loaf professor **Michael Cadden** gave the keynote address at the conference. The conference is cosponsored by the First City Players of Ketchikan.

Arlene Mestas received a $1,000 Teacher Dream Fund Grant from the Center for Teaching Excellence at Eastern New Mexico University. The grant will fund her travel to Mexico City and the supplies needed to videotape images found in Corky Gonzalez's poem "I am Joaquin."

In February, 1999, **Gary Montaño** received a $1,000 Teacher Dream Fund Grant from the Center for Teaching Excellence at Eastern New Mexico University and the Ruidoso Municipal School District. The grant will fund telecommunications exchanges and ongoing collaborative work between Gary's and Steve Schadler's classrooms.

Renee Moore was awarded a second year of funding from The Spencer Foundation for her Practitioner-Research Communication and Mentoring Grant, which supports her research with African American students on Standard English. She was a panelist at The Spencer Foundation's conference, "Collaborative Research for Practice," held March 11-12 in New Orleans. Renee presented a workshop, "Teaching Grammar to African American Students," at the annual conference of the Mississippi Council of Teachers of English, in Jackson, February 26. Renee will be the keynote speaker at the Eighth Annual Teacher Researcher Conference sponsored by Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools, the Greater Washington Reading Council, and the Northern Virginia Writing Project, April 29-30.

Patricia Parrish was featured in the January, 1999, issue of *NEA Today* concerning her work on the Connections Project. Patricia has presented at several national and state conferences: the National Council of Teachers of English, the Mississippi Association of School Administrators, the Mississippi Staff Development Association, and the Mississippi Milken Conference. She was recently named to the Mississippi Association of Educators Instruction and Professional Development Committee.

David Leo-Nyquist and **Bill Rich** published "Getting It Right: Design Principles for Starting a Small-Scale School/College Collaboration" in the September 1998 *English Journal*. The article describes how university and high school faculty collaborate to prepare preservice English teachers for teaching.

Sylvia Saenz and interdisciplinary teammate **Martha Sheppard** sponsored two winning eighth grade research teams in a contest supported by the Arizona Advisory Council on Environmental Research. Each team won second place in its category and will receive a $5,000 grant to fund a field trip to learn about water rights and the effect of farm chemicals on human health. Field trips will include visits to Glenn Canyon Dam, Hoover Dam, agricultural test farms, a science museum, and the Grand Canyon.

Sandra Porter received a $700 Teaching Incentive Grant from her school district to obtain software and books to create a school-to-work English class that incorporates telecommunications technology. Another grant from the district enabled Sandra to take 42 students to a Job Corps site, the *Frontiersman Newspaper*, and the school district computer center to learn about technology as it is related to career choices.

Ellen Temple presented the results of her classroom research, "Genres: Listening, Writing and Performing," at the Vermont Council of Teachers of English and the National Writing Project joint conferences on March 13 and 27, 1999, in Rutland and Burlington, Vermont. Several of her students co-presented with her, performing an original play that they developed and wrote as part of the research plan. Ellen also presented "Developing a Standards-Based Student and Parent Report Card" at the annual conference of the New England League of Middle Schools, Providence, RI, April 1, 1999.

After a comprehensive examination process, **Pat Truman** qualified for National Board Certification in Early Adolescent Language Arts. The certification requires submission of a complete teaching portfolio, successful completion of a day-long written exam, thorough knowledge of curricular resources, ability to analyze student work samples, and creative management of challenging teaching situations.

Maria Winfield was appointed to the founding board of the Agape Christian Youth Center in Sierra Vista, AZ, to plan a city-wide youth center. Her duties include soliciting community support, designing and planning the building, fundraising, attending the board meetings, and including students in the planning. During African American history month in the Huachuca City School District, Maria presented "A Love Story," a workshop to involve students actively in the study of history. Students viewed reproductions of vintage photography, created poetry and collages, and participated in dance.

Bread Loaf Rural

Since 1993, the following rural teachers have received fellowships to study at the Bread Loaf School of English through generous support of the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, the Educational Foundation of America, the Annenberg Rural Challenge, and Middlebury College.

FELLOW	SCHOOL	SCHOOL ADDRESS
Alaska		
Christa Bruce	Schoenbar Middle School	217 Schoenbar Rd., Ketchikan AK 99901
Patricia Carlson	Lathrop High School	901 Airport Way, Fairbanks AK 99701
Scott Christian	University of Alaska-Southeast	Bill Ray Center, 1108 F St., Juneau AK 99801
JoAnn Ross Cunningham	Haines High School	P.O. Box 1289, Haines AK 99827
Samantha Dunaway	Nome Beltz High School	P.O. Box 131, Nome AK 99762
Hugh C. Dyment	Bethel Alternative Boarding School	P.O. Box 1858, Bethel AK 99559
Pauline Evon	Kwethluk Community School	Kwethluk AK 99621
Patricia Finegan	Schoenbar Middle School	217 Schoenbar Rd., Ketchikan AK 99901
Allison Holsten	Palmer High School	1170 W. Arctic, Palmer AK 99645
David Koehn	(formerly of) Barrow High School	P.O. Box 960, Barrow AK 99723
Joe Koon	Bethel Regional High School	P.O. Box 1211, Bethel AK 99559
Danielle S. Lachance	Hydaburg City Schools	P.O. Box 109, Hydaburg AK 99922
Andrew Lesh	Akiuk Memorial School	Kasigluk AK 99609
Susan McCauley	Mountain Village School	Mountain Village AK 99632
Sandra A. McCulloch	Caputnguaq High School	P.O. Box 72, Chefornak AK 99561
Taylor McKenna	Schoenbar Middle School	217 Schoenbar Rd., Ketchikan AK 99901
Rod Mehrtens	Matanuska-Susitna Borough Schools	125 W. Evergreen, Palmer AK 99645
Karen Mitchell	University of Alaska-Southeast	10012 Glacier Hwy., Juneau AK 99801
Natasha J. O'Brien	Ketchikan High School	2610 Fourth Ave., Ketchikan AK 99901
Mary Olsen	Sand Point High School	P.O. Box 269, Sand Point AK 99661
Clare Patton	Ketchikan High School	2610 Fourth Ave., Ketchikan AK 99901
Prudence Plunkett	Houston Junior/Senior High School	P.O. Box 521060, Big Lake AK 99652
Sandra Porter	Susitna Valley Junior/Senior High School	P.O. Box 807, Talkeetna AK 99676
Rosie Roppel	Schoenbar Middle School	217 Schoenbar Rd., Ketchikan AK 99901
Dianna Saiz	Floyd Dryden Middle School	10014 Crazy Horse Dr., Juneau AK 99801
Sheri Skelton	Shishmaref School	General Delivery, Shishmaref AK 99772
Janet Tracy	East Anchorage High School	4025 E. Northern Lights Blvd., Anchorage AK 99508
Patricia A. Truman	Palmer Junior Middle School	1159 S. Chugach, Palmer AK 99645
Kathleen Trump	Susitna Valley Junior/Senior High School	P.O. Box 807, Talkeetna AK 99676
Linda Volkman	Colony Middle School	HCO 1 Box 6064, Palmer AK 99645
Trevan Walker	Ketchikan High School	2610 Fourth Ave., Ketchikan AK 99901
Claudia Wallingford	(formerly of) Gruening Middle School	9601 Lee Street, Eagle River AK 99577
Arizona		
Priscilla Aydelott	Monument Valley High School	P.O. Box 337, Kayenta AZ 86033
Timothy Aydelott	Monument Valley High School	P.O. Box 337, Kayenta AZ 86033
Evelyn Begody	Greyhills Academy High School	P.O. Box 160, Tuba City AZ 86045
Sylvia Barlow	Chinle Junior High School	P.O. Box 587, Chinle AZ 86503
Sabra Beck	Marana High School	12000 Emigh Rd., Marana AZ 85653
Celia Concannon	Nogales High School	1905 Apache Blvd., Nogales AZ 85621
Jason A. Crossett	Flowing Wells High School	3725 N. Flowing Wells Rd., Tucson AZ 85705
Chad Graff	(formerly of) Monument Valley High School	P.O. Box 337, Kayenta AZ 86033
Karen Humburg	Lowell Middle School	519 Melody Ln., Bisbee AZ 85603
Amethyst Hinton	Catalina Foothills High School	4300 East Sunrise Dr., Tucson AZ 85718
Vicki V. Hunt	Peoria High School	11200 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria AZ 85345
M. Heidi Imhof	Patagonia High School	P.O. Box 254, Patagonia AZ 85624
Beverly Jacobs	Marana High School	12000 Emigh Rd., Marana AZ 85653
Nancy Jennings	Ganado Intermediate School	P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
Rex Lee Jim	Navajo Community College	P.O. Box 6, Tsaile AZ 86545

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Cecelia Lewis	Buena High School	3555 Fry Blvd., Sierra Vista AZ 85635
Jill Loveless	Globe Junior High School	501 E. Ash St., Globe AZ 8550i
James Lujan	Ganado Intermediate School	P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
Jody K. McNelis	(formerly of) Santa Cruz Valley Union H. S.	9th and Main St., Eloy AZ 85231
Kevin T. McNulty	(formerly of) Calabasas Middle School	220 Lito Galindo, Rio Rico AZ 85648
Janet Olson	(formerly of) Chinle Elementary School	P.O. Box 587, Chinle AZ 86503
Robin Pete	Ganado High School	P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
Tamarah Pfeiffer	Ganado High School	P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
Lois Rodgers	Patagonia High School	P.O. Box 254, Patagonia AZ 85624
Joy Rutter	Window Rock High School	P.O. Box 559, Fort Defiance AZ 86504
Sylvia Saenz	Sierra Vista Middle School	3535 E. Fry Blvd., Sierra Vista AZ 85635
Stephen Schadler	Rio Rico High School	1220 Lito Galindo, Rio Rico AZ 85648
Karen Snow	(formerly of) Ganado Primary School	P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
Nan Talahongva	(formerly of) Hopi Junior/Senior High School	P.O. Box 337, Keams Canyon AZ 86034
Judy Tarantino	Ganado Intermediate School	P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
Edward Tompkins	Lake Havasu High School	2675 Palo Verde Blvd., Havasu City AZ 86403
Risa Udall	St. Johns High School	P.O. Box 429, St. Johns AZ 85936
Maria Winfield	Sierra Vista Middle School	3535 E. Fry Blvd., Sierra Vista AZ 85635
John Zembiec	(formerly of) Chinle Junior High School	P.O. Box 587, Chinle AZ 86503

Colorado

Stephen Hanson	Battle Rock Charter School	11247 Road G., Cortez CO 81321
Sonja Horoshko	Battle Rock Charter School	11247 Road G., Cortez CO 81321
Mary Juzwik	Bridge School	6717 S. Boulder Rd., Boulder CO 80303
John Kissinger	Montrose High School	P.O. Box 1626, Montrose CO 81402
Joanne Labosky	Lake George Charter School	P.O. Box 420, Lake George CO 80827
Joan Light	Montrose High School	P.O. Box 1626, Montrose CO 81402
Maria Roberts	Peetz Plateau School	311 Coleman Ave., Peetz CO 80747
Sharilyn West	Cheraw High School	P.O. Box 159, Cheraw CO 81030

Georgia

Carolyn Coleman	West Laurens High School	338 Laurens School Rd, Dublin GA 31021
Rosetta Coyne	Brooks County Middle School	Quitman GA 31643
Jane Grizzle	Ware County Middle School	2301 Cherokee St., Waycross GA 31501
Elizabeth McQuaig	Fitzgerald High School	P.O. Box 389, Fitzgerald GA 31750
Beverly Thomas	Warren County High School	509 Gibson St., Warrenton GA 30828
K.C. Thornton	Ware County Middle School	2301 Cherokee St., Waycross GA 31501
Mya Ward	Warren County High School	509 Gibson St., Warrenton GA 30828

Mississippi

Brad Busbee	Ocean Springs High School	406 Holcomb Blvd., Ocean Springs MS 39564
William J. Clarke	(formerly of) Shivers High School	P.O. Box 607, Aberdeen MS 38730
Leslie Fortier	Jones Junior High School	1125 N. 5th Ave., Laurel MS 39440
Carolyn Hardy	R. H. Watkins High School	1100 W. 12th St., Laurel MS 39440
Myra Harris	Pascagoula High School	2903 Pascagoula St., Pascagoula MS 29567
William E. Kirby	North Forrest High School	693 Eatonville Rd., Hattiesburg MS 39401
Sharon Ladner	Pascagoula High School	2903 Pascagoula St., Pascagoula MS 29567
Renee Moore	Broad Street High School	P.O. Box 149, Shelby MS 38774
Terri Noonkester	(formerly of) Hawkins Junior High School	523 Forrest St., Hattiesburg MS 39401
Patricia Parrish	Sumrall Attendance Center	P.O. Box 187, Sumrall MS 39482
Patsy Pipkin	Oxford Junior High School	409 Washington Ave., Oxford MS 38655
Peggy Turner	Saltillo High School	Box 460, Saltillo MS 38866
Penny Wallin	(formerly of) Jones Junior High School	1125 N. 5th Ave., Laurel MS 39440

New Mexico

Kim Bannigan	Rio Rancho High School	301 Loma Colorado, Rio Rancho NM 87124
Anne Berlin	Lincoln Elementary School	801 W. Hill Ave., Gallup NM 87305
Wendy Beserra	(formerly of) Deming Public Schools	501 W. Florida, Deming NM 88030
Erika Brett	Hatch High School	P.O. Box 790, Hatch NM 87937
Dorothy I. Brooks	(formerly of) Ojo Amarillo Elementary School	P.O. Box 768, Fruitland NM 87416
Lorraine Duran	Memorial Middle School	Old National Rd., Las Vegas NM 87701
Ann Eilert	(formerly of) Los Alamos High School	300 Diamond Dr., Los Alamos NM 87544
Nona Edelson	Santa Fe Indian School	1501 Cerrillos Rd., Santa Fe NM 87502
Renee Evans	Crownpoint High School	P.O. Box 700, Crownpoint NM 87313
Daniel Furlow	Clayton High School	323 S 5th St., Clayton NM 88415
Emily Graeser	(formerly of) Twin Buttes High School	P.O. Box 680, Zuni NM 87327
Annette Hardin	Truth or Consequences Middle School	P.O. Box 952, Truth or Consequences NM 87901
Diana Jaramillo	Pojoaque High School	Pojoaque Station, Santa Fe NM 87501
Susan Jesinsky	(formerly of) Santa Teresa Middle School	P.O. Box 778, Santa Teresa NM 88008
John Kelly	Shiprock High School	P.O. Box 6003, Shiprock NM 87420
Carol Ann Krajewski	Pecos Elementary School	P.O. Box 368, Pecos NM 87552
Roseanne Lara	Gadsden Middle School	Rt. 1, Box 196, Anthony NM 88021
Juanita Lavadie	Taos Day School	P.O. Drawer X, Taos NM 87571
Leslie Lopez	Native American Preparatory School	P.O. Box 260, Rowe NM 87526
Timothy Lucero	Robertson High School	5th & Friedman Streets, Las Vegas NM 87701
Carlotta Martza	Twin Buttes High School	P.O. Box 680, Zuni NM 87327
Theresa Melton	Tse'Bit'ai Middle School	P.O. Box 1873, Shiprock NM 87420
Arlene Mestas	Bernalillo High School	P.O. Box 640, Bernalillo NM 87004
Susan Miera	Pojoaque High School	Pojoaque Station, Santa Fe NM 87501
Gary Montaño	Carlsbad High School	408 N. Canyon, Carlsbad NM 88220
Barbara Pearlman	Hot Springs High School	P.O. Box 952, Truth or Consequences NM 87901
Jane V. Pope	Lovington High School	701 W. Ave. K, Lovington NM 88260
Virginia Rawlojohn	Estancia High School	P.O. Box 68, Estancia NM 87016
Stan Renfro	Wingate High School	P.O. Box 2, Fort Wingate NM 87316
Zita Schlautmann	Bernalillo High School	Box 640, Bernalillo NM 8704
Norma Sheff	Hatch Elementary School	Hatch NM 87937
Philip Sittnick	Laguna Middle School	P.O. Box 268, Laguna NM 87026
Lauren Thomas Sittnick	Laguna Middle School	P.O. Box 268, Laguna NM 87026
Bruce R. Smith	Jemez Valley High School	8501 Highway 4, Jemez Pueblo NM 87024
Marilyn Trujillo	Taos Day School	P.O. Drawer X, Taos NM 87571
Michelle Wyman-Warren	Mountainair High School	P.O. Box 456, Mountainair NM 87036

South Carolina

Janet Atkins	Greenville County School District	301 Camperdown, Box 2848, Greenville SC 29602
Michael Atkins	Beck Academy of Languages	302 McAlister Rd., Greenville SC 29607-2597
Polly E. Brown	Belton-Honea Path High School	11000 Belton Hwy., Honea Path SC 29654
Victoria Chance	Travelers Rest High School	115 Wilhelm Winter St., Travelers Rest SC 29690
Raymond Cook	Socastee High School	4900 Socastee Blvd., Myrtle Beach SC 29575
Ginny DuBose	Waccamaw High School	2688 River Rd., Pawleys Island SC 29585
Monica M. Eaddy	Mayo H. S. for Math, Science &Technology	405 Chesnut St., Darlington SC 29532
Barbara Everson	Belton-Honea Path High School	11000 Belton Hwy., Honea Path SC 29654
Doris Ezell-Schmitz	Chester Middle School	112 Caldwell St., Chester SC 29706
Anne Gardner	Georgetown High School	P.O. Box 1778, Georgetown SC 29442
Joyce Summerlin Glunt	(formerly of) Hunter-Kinard-Tyler High School	Box 158, Norway SC 29113
Linda Hardin	Beck Academy of Languages	302 McAlister Rd., Greenville SC 29607
Tracy Hathaway	(formerly of) Robert Smalls Middle School	43 Alston Rd., Beaufort SC 29902
Priscilla E. Kelley	Pelion High School	P.O. Box 68, Pelion SC 29123
Nancy Lockhart	Homebound Tutor, Colleton School District	P.O. Box 290, Walterboro SC 29542
Robin McConnell	Calhoun Falls High School	Edgefield St., Calhoun Falls SC 29628
Carolyn Pierce	Cheraw High School	649 Chesterfield Hwy., Cheraw SC 29520
Anne Shealy	John Ford Middle School	P.O. Box 287, Saint Matthews SC 29135
Betty Slesinger	(formerly of) Irmo Middle School	6051 Wescott Rd., Columbia SC 29212
Elizabeth V. Wright	Ronald E. McNair Junior High School	Carver St., Lake City SC 29560

Bread Loaf
Rural Teacher Network

Vermont

Kurt Broderson	Mt. Abraham Union High School	9 Airport Dr., Bristol VT 05443
Mary Burnham	Waits River Valley School	Rt. 25, East Corinth VT 05040
Mary Ann Cadwallader	(formerly of) Mill River Union High School	Middle Rd., North Clarendon VT 05773
Katharine Carroll	Middlebury Union High School	Charles Ave., Middlebury VT 05753
Moira Donovan	Peoples Academy	Morrisville VT 05661
Jane Harvey	Brattleboro Union High School	50 Fairground Rd., Brattleboro VT 05301
Margaret Lima	Canaan Memorial High School	1 School St., Canaan VT 05903
Suzane Locarno	Hazen Union School	Main St., Hardwick VT 05843
Judith Morrison	Hinesburg Elementary/Middle School	Hinesburg VT 05461
Bill Rich	Colchester High School	Laker Ln., Colchester VT 05446
Gretchen Stahl	Harwood Union High School	RFD 1 Box 790, Moretown VT 05660
Ellen Temple	Camels Hump Middle School	Brown Trace Rd., Richmond VT 05477
Vicki L. Wright	Mt. Abraham Union High School	7 Airport Dr., Bristol VT 05753
Carol Zuccaro	St. Johnsbury Academy	Main St., St. Johnsbury VT 05819

At Large

Rob Buck	East Valley High School	East 15711 Wellesley, Spokane WA 99216
Jane Caldwell	Board of Cooperative Educational Services	Dix Ave., Hudson Falls NY 12839
Jean Helmer	Belle Fourche High School	1113 National St., Belle Fourche SD 57717
Christine Lorenzen	Killingly Intermediate School	Upper Maple St., Dayville CT 06241
John Rugebregt	Maria Carrillo High School	6975 Montecito Blvd., Santa Rosa CA 95409
Peggy Schaedler	East Hampton Middle School	19 Childs Rd., East Hampton CT 06424
James Schmitz	Kennedy Charter Public School	P.O. Box 472527, Charlotte NC 28247
Patricia Watson	Floyd County Schools	Prestonburg KY 41653

DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fellowships for Rural Middle and High School Teachers in Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, New Mexico and Vermont

The Bread Loaf School of English of Middlebury College offers full-cost fellowships for rural middle and high school teachers to attend the Bread Loaf School of English as Fellows of the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network, now in its seventh year; preference is given to teachers in low-income communities. These teachers will be eligible to reapply for fellowships for a second and third summer at any one of the four Bread Loaf campuses, in Vermont; Lincoln College, Oxford; New Mexico; and Alaska. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fellows spend their first summer session at the Bread Loaf campus in Vermont, taking two courses in writing, literature, or theater. Only full-time public school teachers are eligible. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fellowships for rural teachers cover all expenses for the summer session: tuition, room, board, and travel.

During the summer session, Fellows receive training in Bread Loaf's telecommunications network, BreadNet, and participate in national and state networked projects. Each Fellow receives a $1,000 stipend to finance telecommunications costs, to make modest equipment purchases, and to finance the implementation of a classroom-research project in his or her school.

The mission of the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund is to foster fundamental improvement in the quality of educational and career development opportunities for all school-age youth, and to increase access to these improved services for young people in low-income communities.

For application materials and a detailed description of the Bread Loaf program, write to:
James Maddox, Director
Bread Loaf School of English
Middlebury College
Middlebury, VT 05753

PHONE: 802-443-5418

FAX: 802-443 2060

EMAIL:
BLSE@breadnet.middlebury.edu

Or visit the Bread Loaf website:
http://www.blse.middlebury.edu

1999 Summer Courses at Bread Loaf

At Bread Loaf, Ripton, Vermont

Group I (Writing and the Teaching of Writing)

Language, Culture, and the Teaching of Writing—Jacqueline Royster or Beverly Moss

Poetry Writing—Paul Muldoon

Fiction Writing—David Huddle or Jonathon Strong

Playwriting—Dare Clubb

Memory, Writing, and Gender—Jacqueline Royster

Writing for Publication—Beverly Moss

Origins of Narrative and the Narrative of Origins: How We Tell Stories and Why—Susanne Wofford and Michael Armstrong

Group II (English Literature through the Seventeenth Century)

Chaucer—John Fyler

Regarding the Henriad: Shakespeare, History, and Performance—Michael Cadden

Politics, Performance, and Rebellion in Shakespeare's Plays—Susanne Wofford

Group III (English Literature since the Seventeenth Century)

Romantic Poetry: Discourses of the Sublime in Poetry by Men and Women—Isobel Armstrong

Fin de Siécle Fictions, or It's the End of the World . . . and I Feel Fine—Jonathan Freedman

On Looking: Victorian Literature and the Visual Imagination—Jennifer Green-Lewis

Nineteenth-Century Fiction and the Meaning of Space-Isobel Armstrong

Modernism: Some Questions for Literary Criticism—Victor Luftig

Between the Acts: Literature, the Avante-Garde, and European Modernism—Sara Blair with Ellen McLaughlin

Fiction of the Empire and the Breakup of Empire—Margery Sabin

Group IV (American Literature)

American Civilization and Its Discontents—Bryan Wolf

Contemporary American Short Story—David Huddle

Modern American Drama—Oskar Eustis

Modern American Autobiography—Harriet Chessman

Modern American Poetry—Robert Stepto

The African American Literary Aesthetic—Valerie Babb

Racial Vision and Nineteenth-Century American Literature—Valerie Babb

Group V (World Literature)

The Novel after Cervantes—Jacques Lezra

Classical Backgrounds to English Literature: Vergil and Ovid—John Fyler

Between the Acts: Literature, the Avante-Garde, and European Modernism 1914-1945—Sara Blair with Ellen McLaughlin

The Comic Stage—Michael Cadden

Group VI (Theater Arts)

Acting Workshop—Carol MacVey

Directing Workshop—Alan MacVey

At Lincoln College, Oxford

Group II (English Literature through the Seventeenth Century)

Shakespeare's History Plays—John Wilders

Two Traditions of Seventeenth-Century Poetry—John Wilders

Literature and Religion in Tudor-Stuart England—Peter McCullough

Shakespeare: On the Page and On the Stage—Robert Smallwood and Nigel Wood

Chaucer—Douglas Gray

Renaissance Romance—Peter McCullough

Reading Elizabethan Culture—Dennis Kay

Group III (English Literature since the Seventeenth Century)

Wordsworth and Coleridge—Seamus Perry

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English Literary Responses to the French Revolution—Nigel Wood

Romanticism and Modernism in British Poetry, 1910-1965—Seamus Perry

Reading and Re-reading Victorian Fiction—Kate Flint

Virginia Woolf and Her Contemporaries—Kate Flint

Studies in English Fiction: from Joseph Conrad to Doris Lessing—Stephen Donadio

Group V (World Literature)
Dreams of Glory: Poetic Vocation and Poetic Form in the Late Middle Ages—Vincent Gillespie

At the Native American Preparatory School, Rowe, New Mexico

Group I (Writing and the Teaching of Writing)
Fiction Writing Workshop—Diane Glancy

Cultures of the American Southwest—John Warnock

Rewriting a Life: Teaching Revision As a Life Skill—Tilly Warnock

Group II (English Literature through the Seventeenth Century)
Chaucer—Claire Sponsler

Milton's Poetry—Lars Engle

Shakespeare and His Cultural Geography—Arthur L. Little, Jr.

Group III (English Literature since the Seventeenth Century)
British-Irish Modernism—Holly Laird

Group IV (American Literature)
James Baldwin: Genres, Histories, and Intersections—Arthur L. Little, Jr.

Native American Literature—Diane Glancy

Chicano/a Literature—A. Gabriel Meléndez

Culture, Ethnicity, and Autobiography—A. Gabriel Meléndez

Group V (World Literature)
Introduction to Cultural Studies—Claire Sponsler

South African Fiction in English—Lars Engle

At University of Alaska-Southeast, Juneau

Group I (Writing and the Teaching of Writing)
Writing for Publication: A Seminar—Andrea Lunsford

Writing and the Sense of Place—John Elder

Sustaining Indigenous Languages—Courtney Cazden

Group II (English Literature through the Seventeenth Century)
Revisiting Poetry—Emily Bartels

Shakespeare across Cultures—Emily Bartels

Group III (English Literature since the Seventeenth Century)
The Social Character of the Victorian Novel—Jeffrey Nunokawa

Oscar Wild and the Fin de Siécle: Desire Manageable and Unmanageable—Jeffrey Nunokawa

Group IV (American Literature)
Native American and Native Alaskan Literature—Lucy Maddox

Group V (World Literature)
Performance Is Memory: (How) Memory Plays—Cindy Rosenthal

The English Bible—Kevin Dunn

From the Editor

by Chris Benson
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THIS PUBLICATION of the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network (BLRTN) affirms its members are committed to changing practice in schools. Characteristics we recognize in effective teachers are their willingness to acquire new ideas, their ability to grow as professionals, and their desire to change. Adaptability may be one of the most important qualities of a teacher. As BLRTN Fellow Dan Furlow aptly puts it in his story on page six, teachers "should be in the business of change" because learning thrives in places where change is welcome and experimentation is encouraged.

So why are teachers constantly being reminded that they must reform? Are teachers more resistant to change than other professionals? I don't think so. Teachers I know in the BLRTN work continually to establish a climate of growth and change in their classrooms. More often than not, an inability to change is the result of rigid school policies or curriculum mandates that do not foster freethinking or grassroots innovation. The fact is you can't make someone change. It happens only if the conditions are right and you let it happen.

Teachers in the BLRTN are successful agents for change, in part, because the conditions are right and they let it happen. The BLRTN is especially valuable to teachers whose schools do not or cannot provide the circumstances necessary to foster experimentation, innovation, and changes in personal teaching practices. What are those conditions?

BLRTN teachers believe that inquiry is a primary model for learning. Teachers who come to Bread Loaf, and especially those who are members of the BLRTN, are interested in active inquiry as a way of "continually becoming" a teacher. It's an ongoing process. Active inquiry in the classroom also has the potential to shape students as lifelong learners.

Another important activity that encourages changing practice among teachers is the opportunity to write about and document teaching practices. This documentation of our teaching contributes to state, regional, and national discussions about critical educational issues: accountability, school reform, standards, equity, and so on. This written discourse informs others about our practice; moreover, the reflection and the writing are actually means to changing practice at a very individual level as well. Teachers in the BLRTN suggest that regular reflective writing about teaching can have a positive influence on how one approaches the profession.

Collaborating with colleagues is another important condition that fosters change, and the BLRTN offers many opportunities for teachers to work together: through summers of study at the Bread Loaf campuses where many Fellows are engaged in collaborative activities and graduate work, through state meetings of Fellows held numerous times during the school year, and through online computer conferences that link teachers and students across the country in collaborative projects.

It's often said that good teachers are good learners. There's a lot of truth to that statement. As the stories in this issue of the *BLRTN Magazine* suggest, teaching *is* learning.

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